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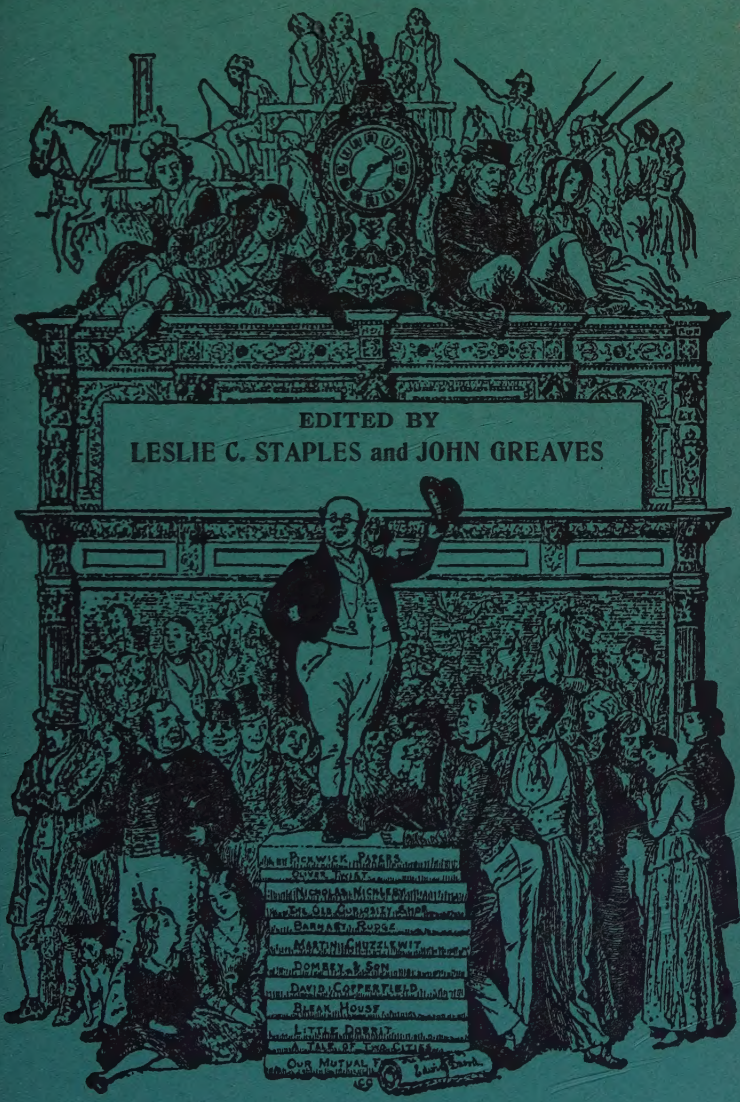

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
When Found. John Greaves	67
"Captain Holland" Identified. W. J. Carlton	69
The Old Marylebone Theatre	77
"Messrs. Four, Two, One." Malcolm Morley	78
A Note on George Gordon. Frank A. Gibson	81
Dickens on the Education of Girls. P. A. W. Collins ...	86
Recent Dickensiana	96
Dickens and Miss Burdett-Coutts. K. J. Fielding	97
When the Wine Merchant Wrote to Dickens. N. C. Peyrouton...	105
The Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens. Mons. S. Monod	112
Letter—K. Katarsky	116
The Guild Houses at Stevenage. J.G....	117
Commercial Travellers' Schools. W. H. Drayton	118
A Great Bookseller. Frank A. Gibson	120
Letters of Charles Dickens (Pilgrim Edition)	123
Andrew Lang—Real Reader of Dickens. Roger Lancelyn Green and F.G.	124
Dickens Collection—Texas University. J.G.	127
Obituaries	128
Dickens Fellowship Diary	128

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LIVERPOOL

Fifty-fifth Annual Conference, May 26th-29th, 1961

Programme

Friday, May 26th—

8-00 p.m. Reception at the Town Hall by kind permission of the Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

Saturday, May 27th—

10.00 a.m. Business Meeting at the Liverpool Town Hall.

2-30 p.m. Coach tour round Liverpool, including visit to Speke Airport, Otterspool Promenade and Gardens, and a conducted tour round Gladstone Docks.

7-30 p.m. Conference Dinner at the Adelphi Hotel.

Sunday, May 28th—

11-00 a.m. Morning Service at Liverpool Cathedral.

12-00 noon Conducted tour of the Cathedral.

2-30 p.m. Lecture by Mr. K. J. Fielding, M.A., D.Phil., at the Adelphi Hotel.

7-30 p.m. Victorian Interlude. Adelphi Hotel.

Monday, May 29th—

9-30 a.m. Full day tour of Snowdonia *via* Betws-y-Coed, Capel Curig, Beddgelert, Colwyn Bay and Holywell. (Lunch and high tea included.)

Cricket Match at Cobham, Dickens taking the score,
from the picture at Lords, by courtesy of the M.C.C.

THE DICKENSIAN

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WHEN FOUND—

Cricket Our frontispiece is the reproduction of a picture at Lords, purchased in 1932, reproduced by the courtesy of the M.C.C., showing a cricket match between the staff of Cobham Hall and the Rochester C.C., played on August 2nd, 1867, on the Darnley Estates. The figure of Dickens, not discernible in our reproduction, is seated under the tree in the centre, taking the score. At Lords there is yet another picture of a cricket match in which Dickens is shown. In this, the match was played on the meadow at Gad's Hill, and the novelist is seen bowling the first ball. The picture was sold at Sotheby's in 1932 and is reproduced in *The Dickensian*, 1932, p. 169.

* * * * *

The Life of Our Lord We were recently asked what had happened to the manuscript of Dickens's *Life of Our Lord*. After being sold at Sotheby's in 1939 for £1,400, it was left by the purchaser, Mr. William Louchheim of Philadelphia, in a safe-deposit box at Rosenbach's book-store, where it remained until just before the famous bookseller's death in 1952. The purchaser does not seem to have been greatly interested in his bargain, for we read in the account of Rosenbach's life, recently published, that he " really could not imagine why he bought the manuscript or what he was going to do with it." Presumably he regained its custody just before Rosenbach's death. The item was won for Mr. Louchheim against the bidding of both Count de Suzannet and Miss Gladys Storey, who is reported as having said after the sale that she had intended to present it to the British Museum. Louchheim had authorised a bid up to £3,500.

* * * * *

Dickens House Visitors Visitors to 48 Doughty Street during 1960 numbered 8,675, a record and an increase of 1,380 over the total for the previous year. A great number of the visitors were from overseas.

* * * * *

The Châlet It has been found necessary to call in experts in the work of restoration to the Dickens Châlet. The total cost of this work will far exceed the original estimated figure of £1,000 and will indeed approach £1,500. In addition to this, the Fellowship hopes to be able to re-furnish it, so that it appears much as it did when used by Dickens as his summer study. Further donations are therefore urgently required and will be gratefully received. The Fellowship would like to express its thanks to those who have already kindly contributed. The work of restoration has already commenced.

Mrs. Gamp's place of origin in jeopardy

Mr. Spike Milligan, the well-known broadcaster, has started a campaign to save Brent Lodge, Finchley, from demolition. Mr. Milligan assures us that historical research has disclosed that this house was occupied by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts and that Dickens visited her here. It was in this house that Miss Coutts's companion, Mrs. Brown, was attended by the old nurse, some of whose idiosyncrasies Dickens adopted for the immortal Mrs. Gamp, e.g. rubbing her nose along the top of the tall metal fender. Here, then, Mr. Milligan avers Mrs. Gamp had her origin and now this historical house, connected also with Richard Cromwell, Napoleon III and the Duke of Wellington is in danger of being demolished. As Mrs. Gamp would have said: " We are living in a wale ! "

* * * * *

Hon. Editor in Hawaii

My co-editor, Mr. Staples, now nearing the end of his journey round the world, writes of the Dickens Birthday Dinner which he was fortunate enough to attend in Honolulu. It was held on February 7th, in a banqueting room at the Hawaiian Village Hotel and was presided over by Dr. Carleton Green, President of the Honolulu Branch. Col. Harold Kent, President of Kamehamea School, spoke on Dickens, and Mr. Staples spoke of the Fellowship and conveyed to the company the greetings of all Dickensians in London. There was a large gathering of members of the Honolulu Branch and about thirty honours students from the University. Readings from *David Copperfield* were given by Dennis Chaldecot, who played Micawber junior in the famous M.G.M. film.

* * * * *

Literary Britain Display

The bedside writing desk and walking stick belonging to Dickens, and lent by the Trustees of the Dickens House for exhibition in New York were accorded good publicity in the States. Besides being displayed in Detroit in the enormously successful Visit Britain Week Exhibition, these articles were shown to the "Dave Garroway Show" on television, with an audience of between seven and eight million, and also on a local N.B.C. television show in New York, with an audience of approximately half a million. It is hoped that as a result of this excellent publicity there may be an even greater increase in the nnmber of visitors to the Dickens House, this year and next.

* * * * *

Queen Victoria and Oliver Twist

The Sunday Times of Jan. 8th, contained a letter from Dorothy Margaret Stuart pointing out that the statement, quoted by a reviewer from the recently published " Lady Lytton's Court Diary," that Queen Victoria said she had never read a novel until she married, was inaccurate to the extent that the Queen's memory seemed to have played her false here. " In the New Year of 1839, Victoria was reading *Oliver Twist*, to the regret of the Duchess of Kent, who regarded it as a frivolous work." Corroboration, Miss Stuart adds, will be found in the young Queen's early diaries, and also in her " Mother of Victoria," p. 232. JOHN GREAVES

By William J. Carlton

"HOLLAND has Charles Dickens to his eternal credit." So wrote F. J. Harvey Darton in 1933 of the man who, just a hundred years before, was responsible for the publication of Dickens's first effusion to appear "in all the glory of print." This tardy recognition of the part played by the editor of the *Monthly Magazine* at a decisive turning-point in Dickens's career came at a time when all who might have told us more about him had vanished from the scene; and Mr. Darton was constrained to admit that "Captain Holland, after the manner of editors and sub-editors and all the company of Fleet Street, is no more than a name."[1]

The familiar story, told by Dickens himself, of how he dropped the manuscript of "A Dinner at Poplar Walk" "one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, into a dark letter-box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street," and of its publication in the December 1833 number of *The Monthly Magazine, or British Register of Politics, Literature, Art, Science, and the Belles Lettres*, need not be repeated here. Apart from a few scattered allusions to "Captain" Holland in one or two of Dickens's early letters and in the recollections of some of his contemporaries, nothing has emerged until now which might have afforded a clue to his identity and helped to single out the editor from the many others who bore his not uncommon surname.

Less than a week after the novelist's death the anonymous writer of a leading article in a Liverpool newspaper claimed that "the first lines ever Mr. Dickens composed were submitted unconditionally to the writer of these remarks as the merest matter of professional literary business, haphazard, without any introduction or intervention of any kind, and without critic or author having the faintest idea of each other's individuality." He went on to say that the *Monthly Magazine* at that time was "still a puissance, though it had lately parted with its principal contributor, Rev. Dr. Croly[2] . . . Under Croly the magazine was ardently Tory; but it had become the property of Captain Holland, formerly one of Bolívar's aides-de-camp—a high-bred man of a type now passed away, most variedly accomplished, and the centre of a congenial circle as gifted as himself, including many who afterwards made the name of *Fraser*. Holland's Hispaniolan liberalism, stimulated by the hot and turbid English Reform agitation, still seething, led him to look for fresh blood to revive the drooping circulation. Hence one reason why Dickens, then buoyantly Radical, was drawn thitherwards, although there was nothing whatever political in the slight initial paper, of less than half a dozen pages, he ventured upon."[3]

"The magazine," wrote Forster a year or so later, "was owned as well as conducted at this time by a Mr. Holland, who had come back from Bolívar's South American campaigns with the rank of captain, and had hoped to make it a popular mouthpiece

1 *Dickens: Positively the First Appearance*, 1933, p. 18.
2 George Croly (1780-1860) was the editor in 1831, when Samuel Laman Blanchard was acting editor under him.
3 *The Albion*, Liverpool, June 13th, 1870, p. 4.

for his ardent liberalism. But this hope, as well as his own health, quite failed; and he had sorrowfully to decline receiving any more of the sketches when they had to cease as voluntary offerings. I do not think that either he or the magazine lived many weeks after an evening I passed with him in Doughty Street, in 1837, when he spoke in a very touching way of the failure of this and other enterprises of his life, and of the help that Dickens had been to him."[1]

Forster's passing reference to the editor and proprietor of the *Monthly Magazine*, brief though it is, provides one useful pointer to Holland's earlier activities in the statement that he had come back from Bolívar's South American campaigns.

* * * * *

Simón Bolívar, whose campaign for the liberation of South America from Spanish rule was finally crowned with success after many changes of fortune, had died just three years before the publication of "A Dinner at Poplar Walk." His army of revolutionaries had gained some spectacular victories and suffered as many reverses in the early years of the war. They were routed at Cura in June 1814, with the loss of 1,500 killed, and Bolívar was compelled to retire for a time to Jamaica. Here in exile he wrote the famous " Jamaica " letter on September 6th, 1815, analysing the causes of his failure and setting down the reasons for his hopes of final success. After two expeditions from Haiti in 1816 had failed, Bolívar sailed eastward to the mouth of the Orinoco and advanced up the river to the plains, where he was joined by some of the guerilla leaders still holding out against the Spaniards. In July 1817 Angostura (now Ciudad Bolívar) was captured and became the headquarters of the *Libertador*.

About this time the allied armies had been withdrawn from France and Flanders, many regiments had been demobilised, and London, Liverpool, Manchester, Dublin and Brussels were full of discharged soldiers, yearning for the free companionships of the army and eager for a renewal of their lives of adventure.[2] The tide of popular feeling in England ran strongly in favour of the patriot cause and Bolívar's forces were reinforced by a contingent of British troops, many of them disbanded veterans of the Peninsula and Flanders whose names have for the most part passed into oblivion. Among the earliest arrivals were some officers and sergeants to train the guerrillas. Towards the end of 1817 a corps of lancers, organised in Brussels by Colonel Strenowitz from Hanoverians who had served under Wellington, reached the capital of the revolutionary government in charge of Lieut.-Colonel John Needham. With him were ten British officers and N.C.O.'s whose names have been preserved. They were Captains John D. Perkins, J. B. Holland, and Ferriar; Lieutenants Richard Stacy, James Stacy and Charles Webster; Surgeon Robert Fry; Sergt.-Major Benjamin Pearkes; and Sergeants John Williams and Peter Hogan.[3]

[1] *Life of Charles Dickens*, ed. Ley, 1928, p. 64. Contrary to Forster's impression, the *Monthly Magazine* did not cease publication until 1843.
[2] Alfred Hasbrouck, *Foreign Legionaries in the Liberation of Spanish South America*, New York, 1928, p. 105.
[3] A. Hasbrouck, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.

We shall see that one of these adventurers, Captain J. B. Holland, was the hitherto unidentified editor and proprietor of the *Monthly Magazine* in London sixteen years later. Neither his name nor that of John Needham has been found in the Army Lists from 1810 to 1817.

En route for the scene of operations Lieut.-Colonel Needham and his group of legionaries had reached Philadelphia by October 1817, only to fall foul of the authorities in that city. On the last day of the month they were committed for trial by the judges of the Court of Circuit, then in session, the substance of the charge against them being " that they made arrangements last summer in Brussels to combine and create a regiment of cavalry with which to join the Patriots in South America. With this design they embarked at Antwerp on board the American ship *Parnasso,* and arrived at New York a few weeks ago. From whence they came to Philadelphia and took their passages on board the brig *Ellen* of this port, which vessel cleared out last week for Surinam . . . They were regularly drilling in the Colonel's quarters at Philadelphia until arrested, and most if not all of them, it was understood, had been in the British service. One of them wore the Waterloo badge in his button-hole. After a very full examination of the witnesses on both sides, the court remanded them all to prison."

This communication to an American newspaper of November 3rd, 1817, was reprinted in the London *Times* of December 9th. A somewhat later announcement shows that the prisoners were released by order of Congress and proceeded to their destination: but from the moment of their arrival in Venezuela the movements of Captain Holland and his comrades-in-arms are almost impossible to trace. The leader of the group, Lieut.-Colonel Needham, was an Irishman. He was at Bolívar's headquarters in Angostura with " two or three other British officers " when Colonel Gustave Hippisley arrived there from England in April 1818, in command of a regiment of hussars,[1] and he was present at the engagements of Apure, Oriente, Semen, Bocachica, Ortiz, Calabozo, Peru and Callao.[2] Captain John D. Perkins, one of his party of lancers, had been promoted to the rank of Major on account of his knowledge of Spanish and became aide-de-camp to General Bermudez, Bolívar's second in command.[3] Captain Ferriar, also promoted Major, fought in the battle of Carabobo, as did Lieut. Charles Webster, promoted Captain.[4]

The revolutionary army was attacked and routed by the Spanish commander Pedro Morillo at the battle of La Puerta, on March 15th, 1818, when Bolívar himself was wounded. Morillo reported that among the insurgent dead were more than forty officers, of whom ten were Englishmen in their service.[5] Before the end of the year at least 6,000 British troops had taken the field. " Five-sixths of them perished in the war, some in sanguinary fights, some under stress of labour as prisoners in the torrid

1 G. Hippisley, *A Narrative of the Expedition to the Rivers Orinoco and Apure, in South America, which sailed from England in November 1817,* 1819, pp. 243, 396.
2 A. Hasbrouck, *op. cit.*, p. 421.
3 G. Hippisley, *op. cit.*, p. 564.
4 A. Hasbrouck, *op. cit.*, pp. 246*n.*, 412.
5 Salvador De Madariaga, *Bolivar,* 1952, p. 309.

climate of Panamá, but most by famine, pestilence and hardships such as they had never known in European warfare. They joined an army of almost naked men, destitute of baggage, commissariat, surgeons and ambulance, fighting in a tropical country of indescribable difficulty, where capture meant probable death and victory was followed by a general slaughter of prisoners, where the path of war led across plains which turned from desert to swamp with the change of season, through a labyrinth of deep rivers infested by crocodiles and mosquitos, and over a vast mass of frozen mountains."[1]

On May 25th, 1819, Bolívar set out on his hazardous plan of marching through the waterlogged plains of the Orinoco in the rear of the enemy and crossing the high Andes in winter. With the newly-formed but well disciplined "foreign legion" composed largely of British and Irish veterans of the European wars and some 2,500 Venezuelans, his army of liberation drove the Spanish from Santa Fé de Bogotá. Not until June 1821, however, were the monarchists finally crushed at the second battle of Carabobo, in which the British troops bore the brunt of the fighting and suffered heavy losses. An anonymous account of the battle, said to have been related by a participant, appeared in *All the Year Round*, March 28th, 1868. The writer stated that the British Legion lost two-thirds of its number killed and wounded and that as the survivors of the corps passed before the Liberator he called them "saviours of my country."

Whether Captain J. B. Holland took part in any of these operations, and if so in what capacity, the records do not reveal. If he was in fact one of the Liberator's aides-de-camp, he presumably accompanied Bolívar wherever the necessities of the campaign required the leader's presence; but in the published correspondence of Bolívar with his principal collaborators his name does not appear. All that can be said with certainty is that he was one of the fortunate few who eventually found their way back to their native country, and Forster's reference to his failing health in 1837 implies that he did not escape altogether unscathed.

* * * * *

Another of Holland's contemporaries, James Grant, was a parliamentary reporter on the staff of the *Morning Chronicle* where "Boz" was engaged in a like capacity for two years from August 1834. As Holland's successor in the editorial chair of the *Monthly Magazine* who claimed to have been his intimate friend, Grant's reminiscences, published after Dickens's death, must be given due weight, though some of his statements were wide of the mark. Charles Dickens made his *début* as an author, according to Grant, "in the latter end of 1834 or beginning of 1835, in the *Old Monthly Magazine*, then conducted by Captain Holland, an intimate friend of mine." This sentence contains two inaccuracies: the *Monthly Magazine* never bore the title *Old Monthly Magazine*, though often so called to distinguish it from the *New Monthly Magazine* launched by Henry Colburn in 1814; and it is common knowledge that the date of Dickens's first contribution to it was

[1] *Cambridge Modern History*, 1907, X, 293-4.

December 1833. Grant went on to say that " early in 1836 the editorship of the *Monthly Magazine* came into my hands; and in making the necessary arrangements for its transfer from Captain Holland—then proprietor as well as editor—I expressed my great admiration of the series of ' Sketches by Boz ' which had appeared in the *Monthly*, and said I should like to make an arrangement with the writer for a continuance of them under my editorship. With this view I asked him the name of the author."

Although he had received a letter from him a few days previously, Holland could not recollect the real name of " Boz," but remembered that he was a parliamentary reporter. In that case, observed Grant, he must have known him, at least by sight, as he was acquainted more or less with all the reporters in the gallery of the House of Commons. On the next day Holland produced the letter and from it Grant learned that " Boz " was Charles Dickens. " The letter was written in the most moderate terms. It was simply to the effect that as he (Mr. Dickens) had hitherto given all his contributions—those signed ' Boz '—gratuitously, he would be glad if Captain Holland thought his ' Sketches ' to be worthy of any small remuneration, as otherwise he would be obliged to discontinue them, because he was going very soon to be married, and therefore would be subjected to more expenses than while he was living alone, which he was during the time, in Furnival's Inn.

" It was not quite clear from Mr. Dickens's letter to Captain Holland," continued Grant, " whether he meant he would be glad to receive any small consideration for the series of ' Sketches,' about a dozen in number, which he had furnished to the *Monthly Magazine* without making any charge, or whether he expected to be paid for those he might afterwards send. Neither do I know whether Captain Holland furnished him with any pecuniary expression of his admiration of the ' Sketches by Boz ' which had appeared in the *Monthly*. But immediately on receiving Mr. Dickens's letter I wrote to him, saying that the editorship of the *Monthly Magazine* had come into my hands and that, greatly admiring his ' Sketches ' under the signature of ' Boz,' I should be glad if we could come to any arrangement for a continuance of them. I concluded my note by expressing a hope that he would, at his earliest convenience, let me know on what terms per sheet he would be willing to furnish me with similar sketches every month for an indefinite period. By return of post I received a letter from Mr. Dickens, to the effect that he had just entered into an arrangement with Messrs. Chapman & Hall to write a monthly serial. He did not name the work, but I found in a few weeks it was none other than the *Pickwick Papers*."[1]

If we may accept this account as correct in essentials, the series of events it covers—Dickens's appeal to Holland for some remuneration, the transfer to Grant of Holland's editorial functions, and the exchange of letters between Grant and Dickens—all occurred within the space of a week or two at most, probably in February or March 1836, the oral arrangement with Chapman & Hall for the writing of *Pickwick* having been made on February

1 James Grant, *Morning Advertiser*, June 13th, 1870; *The Newspaper Press*, 1871, I, 302-5

12th, less than two months before Dickens's marriage to Catherine Hogarth.

Attempts to unravel the tangled publishing history of the *Monthly Magazine* have met with indifferent success. Walter Dexter, who pointed out some of the mistakes of his predecessors after a careful examination of such files of the magazine as were available to him, tells us that from July to October 1833 the publisher was Charles Tilt of 86 Fleet Street, and that after the publication of the October number the property was sold for £300 to Captain Holland, who acted as editor until the autumn of 1835.[1] The successive publishers during the period with which we are concerned appear to have been Charles Tilt (January-June 1833); A. Robertson, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street (July-December 1833); James Cochrane & John Macrone, 11 Waterloo Place, Pall Mall (January-August 1834); James Cochrane & Co., 11 Waterloo Place (September 1834-July 1835); Sherwood, Gilbert & Piper, Paternoster Row (August 1835). From September 1833 to March 1835 the printers were Baylis & Creighton, Johnson's Court.

Prefixed to the issue containing Dickens's first contribution (Vol. XVI, No. 96, December 1833) was an address "To our Subscribers," in which the new editor outlined his plans and policy. Pointing out that the *Monthly Magazine* had nearly reached the half century, he went on: "It behoves us not to rest solely on our reputation; but by increased exertion to render our claims upon the suffrages of our friends unquestionable. The proprietors have, therefore, formed the plan of placing the work in the hands of a society, composed of the most eminent literary men of the day, whose names will be a guarantee for its future excellence. The most talented political and critical writers of the day have been engaged; and several distinguished French *litterateurs* have likewise promised their aid, to render the *Monthly Magazine* the most perfect work of its kind . . . With these additional claims upon our friends, which will be more freely embodied in a Prospectus, we take leave of them till next year." At the foot of this address was an announcement that "Messrs. Cochrane and M'Crone, of Waterloo Place, Pall Mall, will publish the M.M. from the commencement of 1834."

One new feature introduced by Holland was "The Editor's Letter-Box." "It has been our determination from time to time to devote space to our correspondents wherein they may enlighten the public after their own fashion. Our reason for this particularly good-natured resolution is, that we occasionally receive some choice morsels which, although unsuitable to the pages of the Magazine, will do admirably well for a *mélange* such as we intend our "Letter-Box" to be. Some are interesting from their humour —others from their absurdity. We shall seldom offer remarks on that which is intended for our benefit, therefore let them all go together and each take the credit of his own."[2]

Holland made use of his own letter-box in the number dated February 1834 to write jubilantly: "We again present to our

[1] *The Dickensian*, XXX, 105 (Spring 1934).

[2] Dickens was not slow to avail himself of the opportunity offered him by the "Letter-Box" to protest in October 1834 against Buckstone's adaptation of his piece, "The Christening," for the stage. Nor did the Editor refrain from commenting on what he called "literary larceny."

readers the fruits of another month's diligence. Like the industrious bee, we have alighted on flowers such as but few *parterres* produce. Yet our present number, though greatly enlarged, must not be taken as a full development of our literary means; we have powerful support at hand; men who have stood aloof, and resources hitherto unattainable by public journals. We have gathered beneath our banners talents that have long been devoted to publications in strong political opposition to our own. Although these measures may not seem to advance our political views, we hail their success as a great and profitable inroad upon the bigotry of party spirit, tending materially to strengthen the general cause of literature, which is only yet recovering from the destructive and overwhelming effects of political excitement. Our love for the intellectual tempts us more to climb to a literary than a political eminence; but the duty of a citizen must ever teach us to stand boldly forward in stirring times. The *Monthly Magazine* was founded upon the principle of political freedom and reform. We have faithfully pursued the path of its founder—eschewing the bondage of faction, but supporting to the best of our belief the cause of Truth and Liberty . . ."

The last of Dickens's contributions to the *Monthly Magazine* appeared in the issue of February 1835. Meanwhile his "Sentiment" had been printed in *Bell's Weekly Magazine*, June 7th, 1834; five "Street Sketches" had been printed in the *Morning Chronicle* (on the staff of which paper he was then engaged) between September and December 1834; and the *Evening Chronicle* had begun the publication of a new series of twenty "Sketches of London" in January 1835, the last of them appearing in the following August. The sketches met with a favourable reception, and a measure of their popularity is the frequency with which they were reprinted in whole or in part, with or without acknowledgement, in various other periodicals in England and America.

From Dickens's own letters we may glean a few indications of Holland's movements after he had given up the editorial chair to James Grant. From 15 Furnival's Inn, to which he had just moved from No. 13, he wrote to Macrone on February 19th, 1836: "'Captain' Holland invited himself here tomorrow night, to take a glass of grog, and some oysters. Will you meet him? I shall be most happy to see you in my new quarters."[1] Macrone had published the collected *Sketches by Boz* a fortnight earlier. Some eight months after this, on October 8th, a note from Dickens to Thomas Beard informed him: "I met an old Editor, Holland, today, and asked him to dine with us on Wednesday at half-past four. Will you join us? We shall just be a rubber . . ."[2] And on the Wednesday in question, four days later, he wrote again to Macrone: "I met Holland the other day in the street, and as he appeared much delighted to meet with his old contributor, I invited him to dine here to-day. I suppose it's a compliment, or rather no compliment at all, to ask you to meet *him*."[3]

[1] *Letters* (Nonesuch ed.), I, 66.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, 82-83.
[3] *Ibid.*, I, 85.

In none of the references to him by Dickens, Forster or Grant were any initials or baptismal name bestowed on "Captain" Holland; but an unpublished letter to Macrone, now in the Dickens House, introduced the bearer as Charles Whitehead, author of *The Solitary, Jack Ketch,* etc., adding: "Perhaps you may do something with him in the Novel mag.[1] no name is more capable of doing your name credit than he is." This letter, bearing neither date nor the writer's address, is signed "J. B. Holland."

Dickens was soon to find an opportunity of showing his gratitude to the man who had given him his first incentive to embark on a literary career. *Bentley's Miscellany,* in November 1838, published the first of a series of "Anecdotes of Military Service," a footnote explaining that they were by Lieut.-Colonel Cadell, late of the 28th Regiment. A second instalment appeared in the next (December) number and a third in that of February 1839. The author of these anecdotes of experiences in the Peninsular campaign of 1813 and the Greek war of independence of 1822-27 was Lieut.-Colonel Charles Cadell (1787?–1866), whose *Narrative of the Campaigns of the Twenty-eighth Regiment* had been published in 1835. He claimed to have served in that regiment nearly thirty years under the command of Sir Edward Paget, G.C.B., during fourteen of which he commanded their grenadiers. An enthusiastic notice of his book in the *Monthly Magazine,* March 1835, may well have been from the pen of its editor, Captain Holland.

Among the Bentley papers in the British Museum is a memorandum in Dickens's handwriting, and signed by him, which shows that Holland had acted as intermediary between Lieut.-Colonel Cadell and the editor of the *Miscellany* in the matter of the anecdotes. It reads: "Received September 20th 1838 of Richard Bentley Esquire Twelve Guineas on account of Mr. J. B. Holland for a paper entitled Anecdotes of Service by Lieut. Colonel Cadell. Charles Dickens."[2] Another note, in a different hand, is headed "Mr. Holland p. Col. Cadell," and dated September 22nd, 1838: "To cash (forwarded to Mr. Dickens) for payment in advance of an article to make a sheet, 'Anecdotes of Service,' £12 12s."[3] This unusual payment two months in advance of publication suggests that the money was urgently needed, and it was probably only two days later that Dickens wrote to his friend Thomas Mitton, in an undated letter headed "Doughty Street, Monday Morning": "Are you going into the City—or are any of your people going into the City, who could get me a bank post bill for the inclosed twelve guineas, that I can forward to poor Holland at Paris tonight? If so, it will be a great thing for me, as I cannot by any means set out this morning."[4]

It is abundantly clear from these documents that the Captain J. B. Holland who accompanied Colonel Needham to Venezuela in 1817 for service under Bolívar was indeed the same Captain

[1] Nothing is known of a magazine with this title, but it may have been one of many projects cut short by Macrone's early death in September 1837.
[2] Add. MS. 46, 649, f. 307.
[3] *Ibid.*, f. 311.
[4] *Letters* (Nonesuch ed.), I, 116.

Holland, editor and proprietor of the *Monthly Magazine*, who gave Dickens a helping hand in 1833. " Poor Holland," already a sick man when he passed an evening with Forster and Dickens in Doughty Street, perhaps towards the end of 1837, must have left London soon after for Paris; and there it seems likely that he ended his days.

Time has obliterated all but a few faint traces of the adventurous career—for adventurous it must have been—of Dickens's first editor. Ignored by many of the novelist's biographers and stigmatised by one of them as " a visionary called Holland,"[1] he deserves to be rescued from obscurity if only because his encouragement at a critical juncture meant so much to the young aspirant for literary honours. Regret that we know so little of the story of this soldier of fortune, champion of liberal causes and lover of literature can at least be tempered by the reflection that to future chroniclers " Captain Holland " will be something more than a name.

[1] Ralph Straus, *Charles Dickens, a Biography from New Sources*, 1928, p. 71.

THE OLD MARYLEBONE THEATRE

A fascinating book on a fascinating subject has just been published by the St. Marylebone Society.[1]

In his foreword, Bernard Miles points out that to Malcolm Morley " an old playbill means actors and scenery and footlights and the smell of glue and make-up . . ." In this little book, covering the first twenty-six years of the history of the Old Marylebone Theatre, the author brings to life the men and women who earned a precarious living in this contradictory world of glamour and shabbiness. Starting in 1832, when Dickens was already taking a deep interest in the theatre, the names of plays appear, familiar to students of Dickens—plays he went to see himself. Indeed, Dickens is mentioned many more times in this book than is indicated in the index, which is a pity for reference purposes.

Apart from its Dickensian interest of adaptations from the novels, Mr. Morley, obviously as a result of painstaking research, has succeeded in packing a wealth of interesting material into the 40 pages of the book, with some unusual illustrations of players and the ramshackle theatres in which they played. The smell of grease paint emanates from this little volume and anyone interested in the history of old London, in the history of the theatre or of Dickens will find much of interest. Covering only the first part of the theatre's history, up to 1858, one is left with a great desire to know the rest, through its more prosperous days until it became the present battered shell that will doubtless soon disappear. As Bernard Miles says in the Foreword, " It is to hoped that the second volume will not be long delayed."

[1] The Old Marylebone Theatre by Malcolm Morley, 5/-.

"MESSRS. FOUR, TWO AND ONE"

By Malcolm Morley

IT was an exciting find—the newly discovered Dickens fragment dug up by G. Seawim from *Bentley's Magazine* of February 1837, and printed for the first time since that date in *The Dickensian* of January 1958. The fragment is almost entirely devoted to the doings of Messrs. Four, Two and One, as they are called. They are accused of coming from the Surrey-side of the Thames, where they had been resident for many years, and taking possession of theatres in Drury Lane and Covent Garden. These invaders are said to have supplied all sorts of low-priced theatrical articles to the sacrosanct edifices existing under Royal Patent in central London, to have reduced the salaries of the players, also the prices of admission. Their schemes and devices are amusingly satirised in *Bentley's* and there is small doubt but that the badgering was done by Dickens, editor at that time of the magazine. Messrs. Four, Two and One were said to have recommended a special Anglo-Parisian pen, skilfully contrived to fit all hands, which would enable the writer after six lessons to translate any French piece into Surrey-side English. The reference, of course, applied to the steady flow of crude translations from French dramas sponsored by the numerically designated gentlemen.

After the lapse of over a hundred and twenty years, the identities of Messrs. Four, Two and One present an intriguing cryptogram. Who were they? What clues have we to help elucidate the mystery of their being? The suggestion that their naming is directly connected with the newly reduced prices at Covent Garden to Four Shillings, Two Shillings and One Shilling, is reasonable and it might well be so. But other solutions might be considered. The numerical description may be merely a loose expression, one not intended to give definite indication as to whom the vandals were; an expression like Messrs. A, B and C, using numbers instead of letters. Or it may imply that Four, Two and One came from the wrong side of the river and has a meaning like "Rag, Tag and Bobtail," a description often applied to audiences at those rabidly rival playhouses, the Victoria and the Surrey, to say nothing of that minor of Minor Theatres, the Bower Saloon, all of these houses being on the Surrey side. There is, again, the possibility that the numbers may be without the slightest significance, just a haphazard choice to replace the names of the individuals whose conduct provoked the sarcastic comments in *Bentley's*. Yet surely an utterly negative attitude would be too feeble and unlikely, not worthy of the editor . . . Dickens.

Could it be that the initials of the numbers, Four, Two and One, in the formula give clues to the identity of the actual persons guilty of cheapening the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane and Covent Garden? Could they stand for the names of any of the brood associated with transpontine playhouses of the eighteen-thirties? First to apply the test to Drury Lane. The theatre was at that date under the management of Alfred Bunn and whatever expedients he employed to bring people into the house—and he tried every form of entertainment—it cannot be said he came from the

Surrey side. Neither does his initial B fit into the puzzle. Bunn was the sole lessee of Drury Lane from 1834 to 1839 during which time the prices of admission were on a descending scale with Seven Shillings at the top. Drury Lane could certainly plead Not Guilty to the indictment in *Bentley's Magazine.*

Turning to Covent Garden, investigation is immediately rewarded. The initials F. and O. fit Fitzball and Osbaldiston, both of whom had crossed the Thames and were dictating the policy of the theatre. Edward Fitzball was a prolific author of gory melodramas, the majority of which were of French origin. In his day he was known as Red-Fire Fitzball from the amount of red-fire used in his plays. So many of them ended in a bloody battle or blowings up of castles and palaces. Pans of red-fire, behind the wings and ground-rows, illuminated the stage with mounting flames not unattended by smoke. There were no official regulations then to say "Nay" to such blazing effects supplementing the action of the drama. As the resident dramatist at the Surrey Theatre, where David Osbaldiston was lessee and manager, Fitzball had provided plays at the shortest notice whenever wanted.

"Red-Fire Fitzball"

From the collection of Gerald Morice

A year before the Fragment appeared in *Bentley's* these two hucksters of "cheap theatrical articles," Fitzball and Osbaldiston, had migrated to Covent Garden and been guilty of the seeming crime of lowering prices all round. Their blood and thunder productions were being staged with Shakespeare and the classic fare associated with a privileged Theatre Royal. Charles Kemble as Hamlet would be followed by a farce or a melodrama. Soon melodrama was to prevail over all else, and invariably the melodrama was a Fitzball concoction. The list of his effusions given there is long: *Paul Clifford, The Robber's Wife, The Carmelites, The Sexton of Cologne, The Hindoo Robber, Thalaba the Destroyer, Quasimodo* and many more. Few new works were wanted from other playwrights when he was on the spot.

Fitzball, in his autobiography, tells the story of the taking over of Covent Garden. The theatre was advertised "To be Let" in

The Times. Aspiring to be his own manager and acting on impulse, he made a proposal to the Committee in charge of affairs. One of the number was friendly Charles Kemble, the late manager of the establishment, no longer able to carry on through lack of funds. Kemble favoured Fitzball's offer and it was unanimously accepted. Proudly the dramatist told his wife of his new responsibilities. Her response lacked enthusiasm. Every week there would be salaries to pay and, inevitably, the worry of finding the money would be present when the returns at the Box Office failed to provide enough. Richer and wiser men had failed at the Garden. Fitzball weakened. He was more timid at heart than the bold ruffians in his melodramas. But it was too late to retreat; the lease of the theatre belonged to him, and he admitted being attacked by a severe malady, probably brought on by the mental anxiety that now assailed him. How bitterly he regretted his impetuous behaviour. At this moment, like a scene from one of his own plays, came a letter from Osbaldiston asking for a slice in the speculation. Fitzball jumped for joy and offered him the whole theatre. Osbaldiston took it and, at the same time, agreed to keep Fitzball with him as emergency author, as the position was termed. The outcome of the proceedings was that Osbaldiston and Fitzball ruled at Covent Garden for the following two years.

David Osbaldiston

Courtesy of Albert and Victoria Museum

Fitzball should not be dismissed altogether as a dramatist. Though a lot of his work was lurid and flavoured with cheap heroics, some of it approached a higher standard. He rose to blank verse on occasions and, in addition, furnished the libretti of some successful operas, *Maritana* with the music of Vincent Wallace being one. Osbaldiston, a *bravura* actor, was reasonably suited in parts like Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Rollo in *Pizarro*. His bent, however, was for management and rarely was he without a theatre of his own. At Covent Garden his first

season more than paid its way but the second (1836 to 1837) lost money. The reason stated by Fitzball was that too much had been spent on the productions. Osbaldiston hastened from the Garden and, after a spell at the City of London Theatre, became lessee of the Victoria (the Old Vic) where, with Miss Vincent, the tearful heroine of domestic drama, he prospered until his death in 1850.

If Mr. Four and Mr. One are rightly placed as Fitzball and Osbaldiston, there still remains the riddle of Mr. Two. His initial T does not fit any likely person on the Surrey side at that date. Mr. Two is an unknown, maybe a silent partner of the others; unless his invented cognomen was added to the formula for the fun of the thing, meaning he was nobody at all.

A NOTE ON GEORGE GORDON

By Frank A. Gibson

IN an early number of *The Dickensian* a reader made the rather remarkable suggestion that a memorial might be placed somewhere or other to commemorate Lord George Gordon, the dubious "hero" of the Gordon riots—and the indubitable character in *Barnaby Rudge*. Dickens's version of Gordon's character hardly calls for a tribute of this kind. But, brilliant, interesting and amusing as Dickens's improvisation was, its historical lacunae have inevitably become more apparent with the lapse of time and the discovery of additional contemporary evidence. John Forster, for instance, took the too-easy and over-simplified view that Gordon was mad.

"Say what you please of Gordon," wrote Dickens, (I [Forster] had objected to some points in his view of this madman, stated much too favourably, as I thought), "he must have been at heart a kind man and a lover of the despised and rejected, after his own fashion. He lived upon a small income, and always within it; was known to relieve the necessities of many people; exposed in his place the corrupt attempt of a Minister to buy him out of Parliament; and did great charities in Newgate. He always spoke on the people's side, and tried against his muddled brains to expose the profligacy of both parties. He never got anything by his madness, and never sought it. The wildest and most raging attacks of the time allow him these merits: and not to let him have 'em in their full extent, remembering in what a (politically) wicked time he lived, would lie upon my conscience heavily." Book Second, ch. ix, Forster's *Life*.

Yet Dickens's generous view of Gordon was not altogether at variance with the opinion of Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, who knew him well, and whose Historical Memoirs, published in 1815, Dickens possessed in the 1836 edition. Wraxall wrote:

> It will always remain disputable whether ambition, fanaticism, or alienation of mind contributed most to the part which Gordon acted in assembling and inciting the people to acts of violence. That he was not insensible to the political consideration and importance which he obtained from his personal influence over so vast a multitude cannot be questioned. To

religious enthusiasm or conviction some share may perhaps be fairly attributed, *but more must be laid to the deranged state of his understanding, though no circumstance in his conduct or deportment could possibly subject him to be considered as insane.* (Our italics.) He appears in fact to have been perfectly master of himself, and in possession of all his faculties during every stage of the riots; nor is it to be imagined that he either foresaw or intended any of the excesses which were committed after the 2nd of June. But he had put in motion a machine of which he could not regulate or restrain the movements; and unquestionably the mob which set fire to London was of a far more savage as well as atrocious description than the original assemblage of people who met in St. George's Fields."

Wraxall adds that the Guards officer who was sent with a detachment of his men to defend the Bank of England (he was Captain Rodney, son and heir of the famous Admiral) on arrival found Gordon vainly endeavouring to persuade the mob to disperse.

The " small income " referred to by Dickens was an annuity of £600 paid by the Duke of Gordon, his brother—a not inconsiderable sum in those days before the currency inflation of the Napoleonic wars, and one which enabled Gordon to keep his carriage. It was in this carriage that Wraxall accompanied him once to Ranelagh, noting that " In his person he was thin, his features regular, and his complexion pale. His manners were gentle, his conversation agreeable, and he had the appearance as well as the deportment of a man of quality. There was, however, something in his cast of countenance that indicated cunning, or a perverted understanding, or both."

* * * * *

When that extraordinary charlatan (but not wholly ineffective empiric) Cagliostro, was in London for the second time, in 1786, Gordon immediately hobnobbed with him, as with a kindred, if master, spirit. It is likely that Gordon obtained from him the material for his last and fatal sensation, the criminal libel upon France's Queen, Marie Antoinette. Gordon remained true to Cagliostro when the master-humbug went out of fashion. He is known to have " ghosted " propaganda articles for Cagliostro.

Sophie von la Roche, bluestocking and early—some say the earliest—German woman novelist, describes in her diary a meeting with Gordon at Cagliostro's London dwelling in 1786:

" My eye rested on a tall, emaciated man dressed in black, with fair, closely-cropped hair, a pale face, and strangely expressive dull blue eyes. Cagliostro asked me quickly: ' Do you know this man ? ' ' No,' I said, ' it is the first time I have seen him.' ' How does he strike you ? ' I thought this question was a little strange, but so was the man himself. So I cast another look at the stranger and said: ' He has personality, though I do not think it is a bad one.' "

Cagliostro then asked Sophie von la Roche what her religion was and, when she replied that she was Protestant, said: " Lucky for you, as this is Lord George Gordon, who cannot abide

Catholics. He would have driven you out at once and in spite of me, if you had been one."

This explanation, writes Sophie, amused me intensely, for I had to laugh at the tricks of a Fortune which led an Asiatic charlatan to introduce an English fanatic to a German novelist—and in any case I was glad to see this Lord Gordon, whose fame was both tragic and ridiculous.

Shortly afterwards Sophie travelled to Knightsbridge to lunch with Cagliostro. Gordon was again there, and questioned her a great deal concerning Moses Mendelssohn, speaking very highly of the principles of Jewish religion. On the table was a heap of watercress, among other dishes, and this Gordon ate, " sprinkled with salt and nothing else "—presumably he ate nothing else. The wines were " costly." After lunch Sophie talked with Gordon and gathered that he did not like Pitt, though he was silent when asked why. Fox he liked " sometimes " –when he was " against the Court." Coffee being served, Gordon sat down by Frau von la Roche and said: " What do you think of me ? "

Sophie replied: " I am amazed that you, with your gentle mien, could be responsible for the death of so many hundreds of London's inhabitants, and for bringing misfortune to hundreds of others."

And to this Gordon replied with a tone and expression of deep grief: "Ah! madam, that was not my fault, nor was it my intention; but when the English mob is once roused to ire it can no longer be restrained."

Sophie replied: " But, my lord, a noble Englishman with knowledge of the mob-mind and a love of religion should not release so unruly a spirit in rebellion."

" He listened kindly and quietly to me, pressed my hand, smiling meanwhile, and said: ' I like you, madam, for your frankness. You will not hear any more of this kind of thing about me.' " Nor did she—at any rate at that interview for at tea she noticed that he preferred to sit next to Cagliostro's wife, " the pretty Countess Seraphine " [Serafina] " who already speaks quite good English." Soon afterwards she left.

On a later occasion Sophie was introduced to a Mr. Granci, former tutor to Sir George Savile, whose measure of Catholic relief from ridiculously oppressive laws was made the pretext for the No Popery agitation. Frau la Roche thought Gordon " most hateful and despicable " as she heard " the detailed account of these murderous and unbridled scenes . . . They were never made really public in newspapers or letters, for the Government and nation must have been ashamed of possessing so wild a mob of villains in their capital. The papers never mentioned that fifteen places were set fire to simultaneously, and that a number of invalids and pregnant women died of shock."

* * * * *

Another competent witness, whose evidence has become public only of recent years, is William Hickey, son of the attorney, Joseph Hickey, apostrophised in Goldsmith's *Retaliation*. William Hickey's Memoirs, written solely for his own amusement during

his retirement in the early years of the nineteenth century, are a literary find comparable only to Pepys. Hickey relates that Lord George Gordon, " who afterwards engaged so much of the public attention, and was the primary cause of the dreadful riots of 1780," accompanied him in June 1776 on a sea cruise. Gordon was then, Hickey says, " a gay, volatile and elegant young man, of the most affable and engaging manners." " Hearing that I had recently been in the West Indies, he asked me a variety of questions relative to the state of those British islands. He seemed extremely pleased with the account I gave of our reception at Charles Town (*sic*), saying the Ministry ought to make a public acknowledgment of the liberality of the Americans on that occasion." Hickey was returning to England from Jamaica when his ship, a merchantman, was forced by storm damage to run into the port of Charlestown (South Carolina), where they expected to be made prisoners of war—a prospect little relished by the ship's captain, whose view was that "Americans in general, and especially those of the Southern provinces, are the basest and most unprincipled people under the sun." Agreeable was the captain's surprise, therefore, when, in reply to a petition he sent to the American Governor, the latter stated that "Americans war not with Providence," and gave permission and facilities to repair the ship and depart without molestation to a distance of twenty leagues from the coast. They were in fact not molested anywhere on the voyage to England, although an eccentric Army officer on board subsequently told Gordon a tall story of his scaring off an American privateer by a clever but highly improbable ruse. Gordon was very indignant when Hickey told him that they had nowhere sighted any hostile ship, and said he would warn his brother, the Duke, of this romancer.

The eagerness with which Gordon swallowed the officer's story was characteristic; as was his reaction to Hickey's account of how he himself had narrowly escaped joining the Navy as a midshipman at the tender age of seven.[1] " I think Mr. Hickey was right," Gordon exclaimed (overlooking his age), " and acted prudently. There is no encouragement nowadays in the Navy to induce any man to enter it; it is all job and trick. This I know too well by woeful experience, having already been nine years a lieutenant without the least prospect of promotion." Hickey comments: " This was, however, not quite candid or fair in his lordship, for, having constantly opposed Government in his place as a member of Parliament, making violent speeches against all its measures, he could not reasonably expect that the administration would think themselves bound to give him rank in his profession."

At least it may be said that Gordon did not, on retirement—for he did retire, handing over his commission to Lord Sandwich, the First Lord, and telling him he could do what he liked with it—assume the title of " God Almighty's nephew," as did his contemporary and brother-officer, Richard Brothers.

When viewing the devastation caused by the riots, Hickey was told by his coachman that the original rioters were a handful of

[1] The youthful Hickey announced that he would not join his ship on hearing that he would probably have to eat fat bacon.

the most abandoned women and boys of from ten to fifteen years old, who might have been dispersed by twenty resolute men. " But everyone seemed helpless and inactive, from which, and the mob finding themselves unopposed, their numbers accumulated, being joined by pickpockets, horse-breakers (*sic* house?) and thieves of every description." The first ruin inspected by Hickey was of Langton's distillery in Holborn.

Hickey did not see the riots, as he was at the time on his way home from Holland, but he commented:

> " This most extraordinary event, which struck the inhabitants of London with horror and dismay, originated in the fanaticism, or perhaps it would be more candid and nearer the truth to say in the insanity of Lord George Gordon, son to the Duke of Gordon, with whom I was upon the excursion . . . in the year 1776, at which time he was a reasonable and elegant young man."

So there we have this complex character, man of quality, fanatic, madman, cunning, of perverted understanding, gay, volatile, " reasonable and elegant." (" Of loose morals," said Hannah More; " very debauched," opined Horace Walpole; Hickey—being more than a little that way himself—said nothing on that score.) But when his contemporaries could make nothing more coherent of him, is it wonderful that Dickens fastened upon a few facets of his character to make the entirely credible figure in *Barnaby Rudge* ? And it is almost certain that he was misled by the eulogistic account of Gordon written by the mysterious Robert Watson, who claimed -quite falsely—to have been Gordon's secretary during the riots. It was an act of charity to try to buy such a madcap out of Parliament, and much trouble might have been avoided all round if what Dickens referred to as the " corrupt attempt " had succeeded. Certain it is that, as a member, Gordon might have been run through the body if his mob had broken into the Palace of Westminster. The fact is duly recorded, with much else in inimitable fashion, in Chapter 49 of *Barnaby Rudge.*

Dickens hit the nail on the head when he described Gordon's awakening from his dream at the Maypole. Gordon's life, at first perhaps an agreeable-enough reverie, ended as a nightmare from which there was for him no awakening.

" Tragic and ridiculous," the term used by Sophie von la Roche, is not an inapt description of the whole of Dickens's Lord George Gordon. Of the real George Gordon, as he has been revealed to us since Dickens's time, it must be said that his was a pathological case of some complexity; and his social standing as a courtesy Lord, and godson of the King, rendered him almost immune to the circumstantial treatment that proved helpful in the cases of his humbler, if more fictional, fellow-sufferers, Mrs. Varden and Sim Tappertit. True, he was put upon trial for his life, but he joked about that—challenging one of the panel of jurors, a rope-maker, as being " interested by profession "; and the charge of high treason, with its fearful penalty, was too heavy to be sustained. So he had to perish in the nightmare of gaol-fever at Newgate, libeller of an unfortunate and innocent Queen.

DICKENS ON THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS

By P. A. W. Collins

EDUCATION was a great topical issue throughout the period during which Dickens was active, and he displayed a more conspicuous interest in children and their schooling than any of his literary contemporaries.[1] His first book, *Sketches by Boz* (1836), contained a number of such passages, and this concern reappears in almost all the novels, right up to his final uncompleted one, *Edwin Drood* (1870). Most of his fictional schools are for boys—Dotheboys Hall, Blimber's Academy, and Salem House spring first to mind—for Dickens usually introduces schools into his novels because he is narrating the early life of one of his characters, and he has more boy-heroes than girl-heroines. About the education of the latter, he is generally silent: Little Nell and Florence Dombey, for instance, are literate, but we are not told who taught them. Sometimes, however, the action of a novel takes place, for a short while, in a girls' school, and on other occasions young ladies appear who are or have been governesses or teachers. This essay notes the main passages in his fiction dealing with the education of girls, and attempts to show the relation between his opinions on this topic and his feminine ideal.

The most obvious fact about the schoolmistresses and governesses in his novels is that their formal qualifications for teaching are modest or non-existent. This was of course true to the facts of the time; the Newcastle Commission reported in 1861 that few owners of private schools (and it is these, rather than schools for the poor, that Dickens portrays) had received any training. Almost all of them had started schools, the Commission said, " either because they have failed in other pursuits, or because, in the case of widows, they have been unexpectedly left in a state of destitution." A few years earlier *Fraser's Magazine* had complained that the only qualification of many a governess was " that she has had a twelve months' apprenticeship in an inferior boarding school, and that her father failed last week."[2] In Dickens's novels, many women, young or otherwise, turn to teaching when for some reason or other their financial position has become precarious. According to how he views their characters, these efforts are seen as gallant or ludicrous, and their results—if they get established in teaching—are shown as heart-warming or as faintly silly. Dickens's girls'-schools are never as vicious as his boys'-schools, partly because the former are generally seen through the eyes of a casual adult visitor, and the latter from the viewpoint of the anguished pupils.[3]

Teaching or governessing was, indeed, one of the few occupations open to a middle-class girl or woman who needed to make a living. Thus, Kate Nickleby, having received a good education

[1] This aspect of his work will be discussed in my forthcoming book *Dickens and Education* of which the present essay will form part of one chapter. Since this was written, another account of Dickens's ideas on girls' schooling has been published, containing useful information on the historical background—Chapter IV of John Mannings's *Dickens on Education* (Toronto University Press, 1959).

[2] *Report of the Commissioners . . . on Popular Education*, 1861, I, 92-3; *Fraser's*, XXX, 577.

[3] Geneva Mae Meers, *Victorian Schoolteachers in Fiction*, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor 1953, p. 208.

while her father was alive ("fifty guineas a year without the et-ceteras"), is urged by her Uncle Ralph to get apprenticed to some boarding-school—"You have not been brought up too delicately for that, I hope? . . . You must try it, and if the life is too hard, perhaps dressmaking or tambour-work will come lighter." (III).[1] She chooses dressmaking under Madame Mantalini, probably because Dickens has already chosen school-teaching for her brother Nicholas. Esther Summerson, in *Bleak House*, having no apparent "prospects" since she is an illegitimate child, does begin an apprenticeship at the school where she had been as a pupil. This was the regular procedure for providing such schools with junior staff, and it could be arduous, as Kate Nickleby realised; Dickens presents this plight, in the downtrodden Miss Edwards at Miss Monflathers's establishment, in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. "This young lady, being motherless and poor, was apprenticed at the school—taught for nothing—teaching others what she learned, for nothing—boarded for nothing—lodged for nothing—and set down and rated as something immeasurably less than nothing, by all the dwellers in the house. The servant-maids felt her inferiority, for they were better treated; free to come and go, and regarded in their stations with much more respect. The teachers were infinitely superior, for they had paid to go to school in their time, and were paid now. The pupils cared little for a companion who had no grand stories to tell about home . . ." (XXXI). Other young ladies in the novels whom penury or bereavement forces into teaching include Ruth Pinch, whose indignities at the wealthy brass and copper founder's family arouse even her meek brother Tom to fury (*Martin Chuzzlewit*, IX), and Agnes Wickfield who, with a father ruined by Uriah Heep's villainy, sets up a little school for half a dozen girls. "It is laborious, is it not?" enquired David Copperfield, with solicitude. "The labour is so pleasant," she returned, "that it is scarcely grateful in me to call it by that name." (LX.)

The same expedient had of course occurred to Dickens's own mother, shortly before her husband was imprisoned for debt. As Forster records:

> The time was arrived for her to exert herself, she said; and she "must do something." The godfather down at Limehouse was reported to have an Indian connection. People in the East Indies always sent their children home to be educated. She would set up a school. They would all grow rich by it . . .
>
> A house was soon found at number four, Gower-street north; a large brass plate on the door announced MRS. DICKENS'S ESTABLISHMENT; and the result I can give in the exact words of the then small actor in the comedy, whose hopes it had raised so high. "I left, at a great many other doors, a great many circulars calling attention to the merits of the establishment. Yet nobody ever came to school, nor do I recollect that anybody ever proposed to come, or that the least preparation was made to receive anybody . . ."[2]

[1] Quotations from the novels are followed by Roman figures referring to the chapter from which they come: also by the title of the novel, where that is not clear from the context.
[2] John Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*, ed. J. W. T. Ley, 1928, p. 13.

Almost exactly these words are used in *David Copperfield* (XI) about Mrs. Micawber's Boarding Establishment for Young Ladies, which likewise attracts no visitors except creditors; and Dickens —unconsciously repeating himself over an incident which clearly had impressed itself on his memory—makes Mrs. Wilfer, in *Our Mutual Friend* (I, iv), display the same LADIES SCHOOL doorplate, with the same lack of result. Luckier is the widowed Mrs. Wackles, in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, who announces her Ladies Seminary on an oval board over the front first-floor window; she is lucky, too, in having a complete unpaid staff at hand, in her family of unmarried daughters. " The several duties of instruction in this establishment were thus discharged. English grammar, composition, geography, and the use of the dumb-bells, by Miss Melissa Wackles; writing, arithmetic, dancing, music, and general fascination, by Miss Sophy Wackles; the art of needlework, marking, and samplery, by Miss Jane Wackles; corporal punishment, fasting, and other tortures and terrors, by Mrs. Wackles. Miss Melissa Wackles was the eldest daughter, Miss Sophy the next, and Miss Jane the youngest. Miss Melissa might have seen five-and-thirty summers or thereabouts, and verged on the autumnal; Miss Sophy was a fresh, good-humoured, buxom girl of twenty; and Miss Jane numbered scarcely sixteen years. Mrs. Wackles was an excellent but rather venomous old lady of threescore." (VIII.) The characteristic girls'-school in Dickens, however, is kept not by a hard-pressed wife or widow, but by a mature spinster of narrow and timid mind, and unlovely aspect.

Dickens had first described this stock character in his early twenties, in one of the *Sketches by Boz*. The Minerva House Establishment at Hammersmith was conducted by the Misses Crumpton—" two unusually tall, particularly thin, and exceedingly skinny personages: very upright, and very yellow . . . They were very precise, had the strictest possible ideas of propriety, wore false hair, and always smelt very strongly of lavender." Under their auspices, some twenty girls " acquired a smattering of everything, and a knowledge of nothing; instruction in French and Italian, dancing lessons twice a week; and other necessities of life." Dickens had, elsewhere in the same book, wondered " Whether the course female education has taken of late days—whether the pursuit of giddy frivolities, and empty nothings, had tended to unfit women for that quiet domestic life, in which they show far more beautifully than in the most crowded assembly."[1] It was a question much debated, at a time when, as one girl of the period complained at the end of her highly-expensive education, " Everything was taught us in the inverse ratio to its true importance."[2] These passages from *Sketches by Boz* contain the germ for half a dozen later schoolmistresses and governesses—the propriety, for instance, which makes the " lady abbess " of Westgate House, in *Pickwick*, faint away when, in her nightgown and " a forest of curlpapers," she hears there is a man in the building (XVI), and which causes Miss Monflathers to have a small grating put into the garden gate, through which all visitors

1 " Sentiment " and " London Recreations " (*Sketches by Boz*).
2 Frances Power Cobbe, *Life*, quoted by Marion Lochhead, *Young Victorians*, 1959, p. 19.

could be examined—" for nothing in the shape of a man—no, not even a milkman—was suffered, without special license, to pass that gate. Even the tax-gatherer, who was stout, and wore spectacles and a broad-brimmed hat, had the taxes handed to him through the grating. More obdurate than gate of adamant or brass, this gate of Miss Monflathers's frowned on all mankind. The very butcher respected it as a gate of mystery, and left off whistling when he rang the bell." (XXXI.) Miss Monflathers also recalls the *Sketches by Boz* point about the uselessness of feminine " accomplishments," and adds another characteristic note of Dickens's schoolmistresses—a snobbish gentility. She arraigns Little Nell for being " a wax-work child " in Mrs. Jarley's employ, instead of improving her mind " by the constant contemplation of the steam-engine . . . and earning a comfortable and independent subsistence of from two-and-ninepence to three shillings per week," and she asks:

> " Don't you know that the harder you are at work, the happier you are ? "
>
> " ' How doth the little——' " murmured one of the teachers, in quotation from Dr. Watts . . .
>
> " The little busy bee," said Miss Monflathers, drawing herself up, " is applicable only to genteel children.
>
> ' In books, or work, or healthful play,'
>
> is quite right as far as they are concerned; and the work means painting on velvet, fancy needlework, or embroidery. In such cases as these," pointing to Nell with her parasol, " and in the case of all poor people's children, we should read it thus—
>
> ' In work, work, work. In work alway
> Let my first years be past,
> That I may give for ev'ry day
> Some good account at last.' " (XXXI.)

These and other such passages in the novels relate to the feminine ideal which Dickens always states or implies, an ideal which, however insipid and incomplete it appears to later generations, he shared with most men of his generation. This sweet domestic creature—a Ruth Pinch or Esther Summerson—is not intellectual, like Cornelia Blimber in *Dombey and Son*; nor adept only in such " accomplishments " as flower-painting or guitar-playing, like David Copperfield's child-wife Dora; nor ostentatiously active in public life and full of the Rights of Women, like Mrs. Jellyby or her feminist friend Miss Wisk in *Bleak House*. Certainly, he agreed, girls should be educated, and he welcomed the establishment of new and better schools for them. Few reasonable men, he said, would deny that " those who are our best teachers, and whose lessons are oftenest heeded in after life, should be well taught themselves."[1] By " well taught " he meant, largely, instructed in the domestic crafts and responsibilities which are equally relevant to a comfortably-off Esther Summerson, jingling her bunch of household keys, or to a working-class girl like Charley Neckett, or like Sissy Jupe in *Hard Times*. Certainly, girls should be taught to read, as Esther Summerson recognises

[1] *Speeches of Charles Dickens*, ed. K. J. Fielding, Oxford, 1960, p. 55.

when she teaches Charley Neckett, and Signor Jupe when he contrives that his daughter Sissy shall stay on at the Gradgrind school. Domestic competence, however, was much more important than intellectual or imaginative range. In *Sketches of Young Couples*, published in 1840, he had expressed this ideal in Mrs. Chirrup, of " The Nice Young Couple "—" a condensation of all the domestic virtues . . . an incomparable housewife . . . and a special hand at marketing to the very best advantage." Yet Dickens, most of whose ideas lasted a lifetime, was at least aware of new currents in the thought of his age. In *Our Mutual Friend*, his last completed novel, he satirises the insipid over-protected Victorian miss, in Georgiana Podsnap, and contrasts with her the high-spirited and independent-minded Bella Wilfer, one of his few convincing heroines. When she marries she tells her husband: " I want to be something so much worthier than a doll in the doll's house." (IV, v.) As G. M. Young remarks, " In the profusion of Dickens, the phrase might pass unnoticed. Twelve years later Ibsen made it the watchword of a revolution."[1] It must be admitted, however, that Bella, when married, is not very different in her outlook and status in the household from the other Dickensian heroines who make no such manifestos.

Our Mutual Friend also contains a brief and spritely account of a trained schoolmistress, the Miss Peecher who adores her unresponsive colleague Mr. Headstone " with all the primitive and homely stock of love that had never been examined or certificated out of her." (II, xi.)

> Small, shining, neat, methodical, and buxom was Miss Peecher; cherry-cheeked and tuneful of voice. A little pincushion, a little housewife, a little box, a little workbox, a little set of tables and weights and measures, and a little woman, all in one. She could write a little essay on any subject, exactly a slate long, beginning at the left-hand top of one side and ending at the right-hand bottom of the other, and the essay should be strictly according to rule. If Mr. Bradley Headstone had addressed a written proposal of marriage to her, she would probably have replied in a complete little essay on the theme exactly a slate long, but would certainly have replied yes. (II, i.)

Dickens makes pleasant fun of Miss Peecher and her pupil-teacher Mary Anne: whenever Mary Anne replies to her teacher, she " hooks her right arm behind her left hand, as being under examination, and when making an observation stretches out an arm, as if to hail a cab or an omnibus." Miss Peecher is shown tending her little school-house and garden and happily taking " a refresher of the principal rivers and mountains of the world, their breadths, depths, and heights " in the evenings, and making herself a dress by a brown paper pattern. Dickens adds, " N.B. Miss Peecher and Miss Peecher's pupils were not much encouraged in the unscholastic art of needlework by Government." (II, i.)

In his enthusiasm for " The Movement for the teaching of Common Things in Schools," Dickens was unjust here and often elsewhere to the Government and its educational advisers, who

[1] *Early Victorian England*, ed. G. M. Young, 1934, II, 493.

were not so indifferent to needlework as he maintained. A few years earlier he had written to his friend, the rich philanthropist Miss Coutts, who had offered prizes to encourage such teaching in schools and training colleges:

> I thoroughly agree in that interesting part of your note which refers to the immense uses, direct and indirect, of needlework. Also as to the great difficulty of getting many men to understand them. And I think Shuttleworth and the like, would have gone on to the crack of doom, melting down all the thimbles in Great Britain and Ireland, and making medals of them to be given for a knowledge of Watersheds and Pre-Adamite vegetation (both immensely comfortable to a labouring man with a large family and a small income), if it hadn't been for you.[1]

Kay-Shuttleworth and the Inspectorate he inspired and appointed were, however, quite aware of the need to teach needlework and other household crafts, and Miss Coutts was not the influential pioneer Dickens makes her out to be.[2] Dickens entirely overestimates the opposition, official and otherwise, to domestic training in schools; still, he was sensible in advocating it so strongly, even if many others were doing so as well. As usual, this concern appears not only in the novels but also in the periodicals he "conducted." Articles in *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* expounded and praised the Movement for Common Things; others described schemes for teaching girls to cook, and urges that more should be done in this way, particularly for workhouse girls; expensive private schools, one contributor complained, failed to teach such essentials to their pupils, who should therefore be firmly thrust into household duties during the holidays, instead of left to gossip about clothes with their friends; girls should also learn physiology, and be given healthy exercise at school, such as Swedish gymnastics.[3]

When Miss Coutts gave prizes for "Common Things" to the best students at Whitelands Training College, Dickens helped set the questions, advised her about how to obtain publicity for her scheme, and revised the Preface she had written for a book containing the prize-essays. When the awards were being decided, he wrote long and sensible letters disagreeing with her over the essays she favoured. One of the set questions had been, "How would you teach that the possession or want of self-respect is betokened by dress, and that moral habits are influenced by dress?" The prizewinners had duly proved how sinful and perilous it was to dress showily and above one's station, often quoting St. Paul on "a meek and quiet spirit." Dickens rightly smelt humbug here particularly when one girl noted that gay clothes show an improper desire for admiration, and then went on to say that a sober costume was better, anyway, because it made one "More really admired." Dickens's comment is typical:

> I do not feel [the girls' remarks] to be true, and I have a very

1 *Letter from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts 1841-1865*, ed. Edgar Johnson, 1955, p. 321.
2 Cf. James Kay-Shuttleworth, *Four Periods of Public Education*, 1862, pp. 44-5, 346, 493, 531.
3 See particularly "Not Very Common Things," *Household Words*, July 26th, 1856, XIV, 39-41; "A School for Cooks," *ibid.*, August 15th, 1857, XVI, 162-3; "A Piece of Work," *ibid.*, December 12th, 1857, XVI, 564-8; "My Girls," *All the Year Round*, February 11th, 1860, II, 370-4; "The Girl from the Workhouse," *ibid.*, October 18th, 1862, VIII, 132-6.

> great misgiving that they were written against nature, under the impression that they would have a moral aspect. I attach no blame to the young women—have no doubt that they deceived themselves far more than they will ever deceive anybody else—and believe them to have written in a love of commendation; in a rather more disagreeable phase of it than a love of dress would shew . . . I constantly notice a love of colour and brightness, to be a portion of a generous and fine nature. I feel sure that it is often an innocent part of a capacity for enjoyment, and appreciation, and general adornment of everything, which makes a buoyant, hopeful, genial character. I say most gravely that I do *not* know what I may take away from the good influences of a poor man's home, if I strike this natural common thing out of the girl's heart who is going to be his wife.[1]

Miss Coutts, however, remained unconvinced, and collected evidence from prison-governors and magistrates, to show the baneful effect of a love of finery. Here, as on most of the occasions when he differed from her, Dickens seems to have been more sensible and tolerant.

"The figure of the governess, snubbed, bullied, loving, and usually quite incompetent, is a standby of Victorian pathos," says G. M. Young, and she was indeed the most ubiquitous educator in the fiction of the period.[2] Dickens, however, was not primarily concerned with social groups which employed governesses, and his novels contain only two specimens—one nice and one nasty, Ruth Pinch and Mrs. General. It was, probably, his presentation of Ruth Pinch, suffering the insolent patronage of her employers, that led to his being invited to address the First Anniversary Festival of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution a few months later, in the Spring of 1844.[3]

Several years earlier, he had presented retrospectively the sad plight of the governess, in Madeline Bray of *Nicholas Nickleby*: before we meet her she has left the profession, having had to submit, as a daily governess, to "such caprices and indignities as women (with daughters too) too often love to inflict upon their own sex when they serve in such capacities, as though in jealousy of the superior intelligence which they are necessitated to employ—indignities, in ninety cases out of every hundred, heaped upon persons immeasurably and incalculably their betters, but outweighing in comparison any that the most heartless blackleg would put upon his groom." (XLVI.) The theme was taken up also by contributors to his journals, some time later: articles appeared in *Household Words*, in which young ladies described—presumably from experience—the wretched lot of a governess, at a salary which often worked out at twopence an hour.[4]

Mrs. General, employed to "polish" the young Misses Dorrit, of course receives much more than that. She is a very superior

[1] *Coutts Letters*, pp. 338-9; cf. 303, 321. See *A Summary Account of Prizes for Common Things*, 1856, 2nd enlarged edition (containing Miss Coutts's Preface), 1857.
[2] *Early Victorian England*, II, 491; cf. Meers, *Victorian Schoolteachers*, pp. 229, 247.
[3] See K. J. Fielding, *Speeches of Charles Dickens*, 67.
[4] "Twopence an Hour," *Household Words*, August 23rd, 1856, XIV, 138-40; "Only a Governess," *ibid.*, July 7th, 1859, XIX, 546-9. Cf. also Miss Wade's account of her days as a governess (*Little Dorrit*, II, xxi).

lady, the *doyen* of super-governesses –so superior indeed that she explains, when the delicate question of remuneration is mentioned, that she is *not* a governess. Like many in her profession, she is a respectable but poorly-left widow; she is well enough "connected" to command a large fee. As "an article of that lustrous surface which suggests that it is worth any money," she does credit to her patrons. She combines that narrow propriety and mental vacuity which Dickens always associates with expensive female education:

> In person Mrs. General, including her skirts which had much to do with it, was of a dignified and imposing appearance; ample, rustling, gravely voluminous; always upright behind the proprieties . . . If her eyes had no expression, it was probably because they had nothing to express. If she had few wrinkles, it was because her mind had never traced its name or any other inscription on her face. A cool, waxy, blown-out woman, who had never lighted well.
>
> Mrs. General had no opinions. Her way of forming a mind was to prevent it from forming opinions. She had a little circular set of mental grooves or rails on which she started little trains of other people's opinions, which never overtook one another, and never got anywhere. Even her propriety could not dispute that there was impropriety in the world; but Mrs. General's way of getting rid of it was to put it out of sight, and make believe that there was no such thing . . .
>
> Mrs. General was not to be told of anything shocking. Accidents, miseries, and offenses, were never to be mentioned before her. Passion was to go to sleep in the presence of Mrs. General, and blood was to change to milk and water. The little that was left in the world, when all these deductions were made, it was Mrs. General's province to varnish. (*Little Dorrit*, II, ii.)

As she later explains to Little Dorrit, "A truly refined mind will seem to be ignorant of the existence of anything that is not perfectly proper, placid, and pleasant" and her choice of words here bears out her famous prescription, announced when she is correcting Little Dorrit's reference to her "father":

> "Papa is a preferable mode of address," observes Mrs. General. "Father is rather vulgar, my dear. The word Papa, besides, gives a pretty form to the lips. Papa, potatoes, poultry, prunes, and prism, are all very good words for the lips: especially prunes and prism. You will find it serviceable, in the formation of a demeanour, if you sometimes say to yourself in company—on entering a room, for instance—Papa, potatoes, poultry, prunes and prism, prunes and prism." (II, v.)

Little Dorrit proves a disappointment to her mentor, as Sissy Jupe had been to Mr. M'Choakumchild in the previous novel (for all Dickens's "good" children are impervious to bad education). "She has expressed herself to me," Mrs. General complains, "as wondering exceedingly at Venice. I have mentioned to her that it is better not to wonder. I have pointed out to her that the celebrated Mr. Eustace, the classical tourist, did not think much of it . . ." (II, v.)

When in *Martin Chuzzlewit* Dickens made Tom Pinch's sister a governess, he was only seizing an opportunity to dramatise the indignities common in that profession. In *Little Dorrit* he is vigorously satirising certain educational and social attitudes, but Mrs. General is germane to the themes of the novel, not merely the pretext for a joke or a harangue. Her insistence on surface and varnish is one of the several expedients through which characters in this story evade truth and sincerity; the narrow conventions within which she tries to enclose her pupils are one form of the prison which is the book's central image (the " good society " which she approves seems to Little Dorrit very much like " a superior sort of Marshalsea " [II, vii]). Mrs. General is a much richer as well as a more relevant creation than Ruth Pinch, who was a mere cypher: Dickens does not present, in Ruth Pinch or elsewhere in his works, a governess of equal vigour to Mrs. General but lacking her faults. Nor does he portray any young ladies who notably possess that independence of mind which Mrs. General undertakes to suppress. As a governess, Ruth Pinch is ineffective—" perfectly unable to command my daughter's respect, or to win my daughter's confidence " her employer complains. (XXXVI.) The contempt in which her employers and their servants hold her is, of course, the main reason for this, but, even unobstructed, Ruth Pinch would not be likely to instil into her pupil much that Mrs. General would have found offensive.

His satire on Mrs. General partakes of the relatively savage anti-Establishment tone of *Little Dorrit*; when, in *Edwin Drood*, he returns to an educator of young ladies, he finds several of the same failings but treats them in a benignant spirit of fun. Miss Twinkleton, who owns the Seminary for Young Ladies attended by Rosa Bud, is given a kindly disposition (and an amusing instead of a grotesque surname) as well as the gentler faults of her species. She is even humanised, by being shown off-duty and in a kindly humorous light.

> . . . Miss Twinkleton has two distinct and separate phases of being. Every night, the moment the young ladies have retired to rest, does Miss Twinkleton smarten up her curls a little, brighten up her eyes a little, and become a sprightlier Miss Twinkleton than the young ladies have ever seen. Every night, at the same hour, does Miss Twinkleton resume the topics of the previous night, comprehending the tenderer scandal of Cloisterham, of which she has no knowledge whatever by day, and reference to a certain season at Tunbridge Wells (airily called by Miss Twinkleton in this state of her existence " The Wells "), notably the season wherein a certain finished gentleman (compassionately called by Miss Twinkleton, in this stage of her existence, " Foolish Mr. Porters ") revealed a homage of the heart, whereof Miss Twinkleton in her scholastic state of existence, is as ignorant as a granite pillar. Miss Twinkleton's companion in both states of existence, and equally adaptable to either, is one Mrs. Tisher: a deferential widow with a weak back, a chronic sigh, and a suppressed voice, who looks after the young ladies' wardrobes, and leads them to infer that she has seen better days. (III.)

In school-hours she exists, true to the conventions of fictional headmistresses, in a flutter of gentility and prudery, but she seems not to have been guilty of underfeeding her pupils, a practice which Mrs. Billikin the landlady thinks is endemic in girls' schools:

> " I did think it well to mention to my cook," observed the Billickin with a gush of candour, " which I 'ope you will agree with, Miss Twinkleton, was a right precaution, that the young lady being used to what we should consider here but poor diet, had better be brought forward by degrees. For a rush from scanty feeding to generous feeding, and from what you may call messing to what you may call method, do require a power of constitution which is not often found in youth, particular when undermined by boarding-school ! "

Mrs. Billickin's beliefs are, as she explains, based on her own experience: " I was put in youth to a very genteel boarding-school, the mistress being no less a lady than yourself, of about your own age or it may be some years younger, and a poorness of blood flowed from the table which has run through my life." These remarks show, however, as Miss Twinkleton replies, " a mistaken view of the subject, which can only be imputed to your extreme want of accurate information." (XXII.) Miss Twinkleton is good-hearted; the teachers in the later novels, whether men or women, are usually innocent of the grosser vices, the rapacity and cruelty, which had characterised the earlier ones, and they are noticeably more competent, too. These changes doubtless reflect an actual, if a gradual and incomplete, improvement in the standards of schools and teachers during these thirty years of Dickens's writing career.

Perhaps Miss Twinkleton's finest moment is her reading aloud to Rosa Bud, whom she is keeping company at an anxious time. This is Dickens's most delightful comment on the spinsterly evasiveness which had provided him with so many of his girls'-school jokes.

> Tired of working, and conversing with Miss Twinkleton, she suggested working and reading: to which Miss Twinkleton readily assented, as an admirable reader, of tried powers. But Rosa soon made the discovery that Miss Twinkleton didn't read fairly. She cut the love-scenes, interpolated passages in praise of female celibacy, and was guilty of other glaring pious frauds. As an instance in point, take the glowing passage: " Ever dearest and best adored,—said Edward, clasping the dear head to his breast, and drawing the silken hair through his caressing fingers, from which he suffered it to fall like golden rain, ever dearest and best adored, let us fly from the unsympathetic world and the sterile coldness of the stony-hearted, to the rich warm Paradise of Trust and Love." Miss Twinkleton's fraudulent version tamely ran thus: " Ever engaged to me with the consent of our parents on both sides, and the approbation of the silver-haired rector of the district,—said Edward, respectfully raising to his lips the taper fingers so skilful in embroidery, tambour, crochet, and other truly feminine arts,—let me call on thy papa ere tomorrow's dawn has sunk into the west, and

propose a suburban establishment, lowly it may be, but within our means, where he will be always welcome as an evening guest, and where every arrangement shall invest economy, and constant interchange of scholastic acquirements, with the attributes of the ministering angel to domestic bliss." (XXII.)

Like many Dickens characters, Miss Twinkleton is at her best when holding forth; other pleasant examples are her speeches to the assembled girls on the rumours about Edwin Drood, and at the end of Term (as she now calls it, having recently discarded the less elegant word, " the Half ").

Dickens is, then, more conventional and more repetitive over his girls' schools than his boys'; he has nothing as forceful or original on this subject as the Brontë sisters wrote from their experiences. Here more than elsewhere in his educational writings he resorts to a type-character and a type-situation, of a kind still familiar in popular mythology and caricature about " schoolmarms "—graceless spinsters insulated from the world. He had been a pioneer in introducing the theme of education into prose fiction, and through his assiduity in visiting and helping educational establishments he was more knowledgeable on this matter than most of his rivals. His knowledge was patchy, however, and the girls' schools represent one of his weaker patches, but even here, where he is at his least original, his ideas had appeared back in the 1830s.

The fact that his criticisms of girls' education were repeated, both by himself and by other novelists, does not of course mean that there was nothing in them. Many of his criticisms are indeed confirmed by women's reminiscences of their schooldays in this period, and by educational reformers of his generation. Schools for middle-class girls—which are his main subject—were very inefficient, for all their airs and graces; a scheme initiated by Miss Coutts, to encourage middle-class girls to enter Training Colleges and become teachers of the poor, failed because the girls proved quite incapable of passing the qualifying examinations. The establishment of the Governesses Benevolent Institution in 1844, and the opening of Bedford College in 1849 and Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1853, were signs of the general dissatisfaction with girls' schooling and their teachers, which Dickens expressed so often. To Bedford College he sent one of his daughters, and he supported other ventures for the better and higher education of women—for instance the agitation that girls should be admitted along with men to the Royal Academy schools. Typically, however, his fiction is concerned with the bad old ways, even the bad old stereotypes, not with the advocates nor the products of the new reforms.

RECENT DICKENSIANA

" Fritz Reuter compared with Dickens." *The Modern Language Review*, a Quarterly Journal edited for the Modern Humanities Research Association, by T. J. B. Spencer, W. G. Moore and F. J. Stopp. Cambridge University Press.

DICKENS AND MISS BURDETT-COUTTS: THE LAST PHASE

By K. J. Fielding

OF recent years a good deal has been written about the friendship of Dickens and Miss Burdett-Coutts. For some time the chief authority was the selection of *Letters of Charles Dickens to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts*, made by Charles C. Osborne in 1931. Then, in 1953, appeared a new collection of *Letters from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts* (Jonathan Cape) edited by Professor Edgar Johnson, which was published in New York as *The Heart of Charles Dickens*. Something about their association has also appeared in *The Dickensian*,[1] and it has become clear that (in Professor Johnson's words) it was one which was both "irresistible" and "creative."

In turning to discuss the last phase of their friendship, as it cooled and died away, I am assuming that the reader knows something of what had gone before. For no one who wishes to understand Dickens should fail to read both his letters to Miss Coutts and the story as Professor Johnson tells it in his edition and in his life of Dickens. Nevertheless, without necessarily criticising the conclusions that have been made by almost everyone else who has written about Miss Coutts and Dickens, it seems time to suggest a new interpretation of the letters which came at the end of their association.

The most obvious fact about the end of this friendship, as it can be seen in his letters, is that after an active and vital correspondence up to Dickens's separation from his wife, it withered and died. The most direct conclusion is that Miss Coutts disapproved of what Dickens had done, and this is borne out by the letters they exchanged. It is true that they did not make their disagreement public, nor was it exactly a personal quarrel. As far as one can see, Dickens was always anxious to be reconciled. Yet he was steadily kept at a distance by Miss Coutts, in spite of a close friendship of over twenty-five years.

This is not the interpretation, however, which has usually been put forward. Professor Johnson has said that he believes that Miss Coutts's "friendship with Dickens remained unbroken." Mr. Osborne was uncertain about it; and a recent biographer has gone so far as to write rather sentimentally about the "deep void" which "must" have been left in Miss Coutts's life when Dickens died.[2]

Yet the evidence of the letters, as given in the two published selections, seems conclusive. They show that, in later years, Dickens and Miss Coutts met rarely, corresponded infrequently, and no longer joined in any of the philanthropic work they had previously shared in for nearly twenty years. All the extant letters appear to have been filed systematically even when they were private and confidential. As far as one can see, there are no

[1] K. J. Fielding, "A Great Friendship" (June, 1953); "Angela Burdett-Coutts and the Victorians" (September, 1953); "Dickens's Novels and Miss Burdett-Coutts" (December, 1954). See also "Sir Francis Burdett and *Oliver Twist*," *Review of English Studies* (April, 1951); and "Miss Burdett-Coutts: Some Misconceptions," *Nineteenth Century Fiction* (March, 1954).

[2] Clara Burdett-Patterson, *Angela Burdett-Coutts and the Victorians*, 1953.

important gaps in their known correspondence.[1] Even though they may have exchanged other messages through W. H. Wills (sub-editor of *All the Year Round*), who gave her secretarial help until he retired through ill-health in 1868, there is no reason to think that Miss Coutts gave up faithfully keeping Dickens's letters just because he had ceased to take an active part in some of her affairs. Even more conclusively, there are practically no references to her in any of Dickens's known or published letters after 1862, whereas between 1840 and 1858 she was mentioned frequently. It seems unquestionable that, after 1858, their friendship ceased, even though Dickens himself may have wished it to continue.

The difficulty in writing an account of these final years is that, while none of Miss Coutts's letters survive, she seems to have taken the dominant part in deciding that they should see each other much less. Dickens clearly still had a great affection and regard for her, but while she still held that it was her duty to try to reconcile him with his wife, they were unable to keep up their association. His letters suggest that he no longer took her companionship for granted, as he once had when they had seen each other constantly, and that although (in other ways) he had deliberately chosen to break with the past, he looked back with great regret to the years of their friendship. What Miss Burdett-Coutts felt it is more difficult to tell, but his last letters to her are so few, and the association meant so much to him, that they may well be considered separately.

During 1859 their correspondence ceased altogether and there is no reference to her in his published letters. He was exceptionally busy throughout the year, but he had never before been unable to spare time to write to her. It can hardly have been that all their various projects had run down and there was simply nothing more to do. Dickens was always capable of making work and was desperately anxious for something to occupy him. He had flung himself into the Readings because, he wrote, "I must do *something*, or I shall wear my heart away." The building of Miss Coutts's Bethnal Green flats, with which Dickens had once been closely concerned, was only just beginning; she was still as actively interested in philanthropy as ever; and Dickens was no less ready to help than he had always been. Their silence can only mean that in separating from his wife he had cut himself off from Miss Burdett-Coutts as well.

There is no question, however, of an outright breach. Some of the old associations remained unbroken, and about these they could still continue to write. Early in 1860 they wrote to each other about the future career of Charley Dickens (the eldest son) who had always been Miss Coutts's protégé. On his parents' separation he had sided with his mother. Now (January 30th, 1860) Dickens wrote to Miss Coutts rather self-consciously. As his son was of age, he could hardly object to her help, and he was evidently moved by her continued kindness:

> "I send you "(he wrote)" a thousand thanks for your most considerate and kind letter, and I deeply—deeply—feel it. I

[1] But see Edgar Johnson, *Letters from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts*, 1953, who thinks this "impossible to say." All Dickens's letters in the present account are given from this selection unless otherwise stated.

trust to God that Charley may thank you in his life and actions; but he never can do so with a stronger earnestness than is in his father's heart —many-voiced to me —almost dumb to you."

After carefully entering into the details of her proposals and suggesting whom she might most tactfully consult, he went on to mention that he had been working hard in preparing a dramatic version of *A Tale of Two Cities* for the Lyceum, and concluded with regret that Miss Coutts's companion, Mrs. Brown, had not yet recovered her health: "Pray give her my love and dear remembrance, and tell her nothing changes me. I have always heard of her, and of you, from Wills, and the old time never grows older or younger with me."

Further decisions were taken about Charley, and Miss Coutts seems to have made herself responsible (as she often had before) for all his expenses. After writing to her about these arrangements, on March 13th, 1860, Dickens again wound up his letter with a tremulous reference to the past:

> "My Dear Friend I cannot trust myself on the ground that lies trembling at the point of my pen. Many reasons, old and new, unnerve me. I think you know how I love you—how I could do anything in your name and honor, but thank you.
>
> My love to Mrs. Brown. Tell her that everything stands upon my tables as it used to do, and that Gad's Hill (wonderfully changed now), is the admiration of Rochester."

Clearly Dickens still felt an affection for Miss Coutts; but he had never felt the necessity to protest it as much as this before. Clearly enough, too, they were no longer in touch with each other except through Charley. Yet, what was not so clear to Miss Coutts, was that, in spite of his regard for her and his regret for "the old time," Dickens was still adamant that he would never accept his old friend's attempts to mediate between himself and his wife. For, heartened by this exchange, she made the attempt—and was firmly repulsed in two letters of April 5th and April 8th. At the same time there was an almost tearful tone in Dickens's replies, also shown in a letter to Mrs. Brown which was written at the same time:

> "I was so interested and delighted by the receipt of your kind letter, that I must write to thank you for it. Yes indeed. In seeing Miss Coutts again, I saw you again, and we all understood one another as of old, and knew that we were all doing our best . . . God bless her, and you! I never forget you. 'Out of sight' is not 'out of mind' with me, my dear friend, nor with you, I very well know."

Yes, indeed! This is strangely saccharine Dickens, writing in a style quite unfamiliar in the rest of his letters. Whatever the "seeing Miss Coutts again" may mean, moreover, it is clear that they were no longer on the old footing. In the letter to Miss Coutts of April 5th Dickens concluded: "Charley is here. . . . I hope you may not have read the Tale of Two Cities, for I have entrusted your copy to his care." But the book had been published for months, and it had been serialised in *All the Year Round*. Hoping that she had *not* read it is very different from the days

when he had sent proofs of his stories to her as they came out, and it makes it clear that they cannot have been writing to each other in 1859.

The same note recurs in these letters again and again. One reason for it is that the few remaining ones were almost all written on special occasions, on the death of friends or members of the family, and at Christmas time. Miss Coutts evidently sent a note of condolence on the death of Dickens's brother Alfred in August, 1860. Dickens replied:

> " My poor brother's death is a sad calamity . . . But he had a good, true, striving wife, and I can trust her with all my heart. This is not the first time I have had occasion to respect her undemonstrative and patiently dutiful character. It is all that she can call her own, but it is a great deal for me to have so much to be a friend to."

It is hardly too much to read into his answer both a sense of isolation and the old feeling of grievance that Mrs. Dickens had helped him less than she might.

In November 1861 he wrote to Mrs. Brown. He had a sympathetic understanding of all that she might feel on her first return to Paris since her visit in the autumn of 1856, when she had gone there with her husband and had returned (after his death) alone. His friend and Reading Manager, Arthur Smith, had just died. Charley had married the eldest daughter of Evans the printer, with whom his father had quarrelled so bitterly at the time of the separation. " I received your letter . . ." he wrote to Mrs. Brown, " with many affectionate and cherished remembrances, on which I need not dwell to you. . . . I wish I could hope Charley's marriage may not be a disastrous one. There is no help for it, and the dear fellow does what is unavoidable—his foolish mother would have effectively committed him if nothing else had; chiefly I suppose because her hatred of the bride and all belonging to her, used to know no bounds, and was quite inappeasable. But I have a strong belief, founded on a careful observation of him, that he cares nothing for the girl . . . Give my ever affectionate and never changing remembrances to Miss Coutts . . ."

Dickens still continued to emphasise that the old regard remained, but he seems to have seen no future hope of any kind of association like the old one. Miss Coutts practically never wrote, but a year later (October 24th, 1862) Mrs. Brown sent what seems to have become an annual letter on the anniversary of her husband's death—or perhaps, on hearing that Dickens was about to begin his first long novel since *Little Dorrit*, she remembered how eagerly they had once discussed the earliest numbers of so many of his works and so wrote to encourage him once more. Dickens received her letter at Paris. He replied in a more characteristically gossipy manner, with a sketch of changes that had recently taken place in France, and with his usual expressions of constancy:

> " On the very day when your letter reached me, I had been walking past the Hotel Bristol, looking up at the windows and thinking of Miss Coutts and you. . . .

You know all that I would say—better than that, you know all that I would *do*—in response to your tender and affectionate remembrances. I am so confident of the freemasonry between us, that I will not write another word on this almost sacred theme."

He concluded by "sending my most affectionate, earnest and grateful regard to Miss Coutts, and the assurance to you, My dear Mrs. Brown, that I continually live over again, the years that lie behind us."

At this time Dickens himself was only fifty; Mrs. Brown, though some years older, was to outlive him; while Miss Burdett-Coutts, who was younger than either, was destined to survive well into the twentieth century; but from Dickens's letters, one would think that there was nothing left in life for them but memories of the past and a common concern in the careers of his two eldest sons. Certainly it seems to have been all that they could now share.

They appear to have lost faith in the future for themselves. Then, early in February 1864, they learnt that there was no security in their hopes for others. Dickens heard from India that his son, Walter Savage Landor, was dead: he had suddenly collapsed as he was excitedly talking about his plans for coming home. It had been through Miss Coutts that Walter had obtained his cadetship in India six years before, when he had gone out at the age of sixteen. On seeing the announcement of his death, she at once wrote to both Dickens and his wife. He replied, "I cannot tell you my Dearest Friend—and I know I need not - with what feelings I received your affectionate letter this morning, or how dearly I prize it." He went on to write of the circumstances of his son's death, and how his illness had advanced so far that though he "wished it had pleased God to let him see his home again," he feared "he would have died at the door." Hard on the news of his death came a bundle of letters about the debts his son had left behind him.

Almost a year later she and Mrs. Brown each sent him a Christmas card or note of remembrance. Rather curiously they were addressed to the office of *All the Year Round*—perhaps they had left them until the last minute to send, or they had reason to think that he would not be spending Christmas at Gad's Hill. Dickens sent separate replies, which reflect how different his relations with each of them had become. To both he expressed his pleasure in remembering the past, his present affection and his warmest wishes for the future, without any indication that he ever expected to see them again or even that it was possible. The heiress and the author had retired to different worlds, annually reminding each other of their existence by Christmas cards. By itself, as the last personal note he wrote her (that we know of), it leaves everything unsaid:

"Coming here this morning for the first time since the day before Christmas Eve, I found your dear words of remembrance. I send you out of my warmest heart my wishes for your

happiness through many coming years, and my ever grateful and faithful remembrance of many years that are gone."

With Mrs. Brown he had greater assurance. He wrote in a strain of tender sentiment that he practically never used with his other friends, either men or women:

> "Until this morning, I have not been here since the day before Christmas Eve. The welcome little redbreast that I found awaiting me, did me good, and warmed my heart. No leaves ever fall, or are ever strewn by any animated creature, over the remembrance that I have which we share together; so he couldn't do his old office for the children in the wood, but he was quite as kind in brightening the recollections with his glowing breast."

However typically "Dickensian" such a letter may seem, it is unique: the only sentimental reference to Christmas in all his correspondence. It surely leaves the impression that but for Miss Coutts, his friendship with Mrs. Brown would never have lapsed so far that their memory of the past should be all they had left. Or perhaps it is even more likely that he was trying to keep up the contact with his old friend, Miss Burdett-Coutts, through her companion. Perhaps, indeed, he succeeded. Certainly no one who doubts that we have (practically, at least) the whole correspondence of the last ten years in the handful of letters here quoted, can fairly refuse an explanation of why Miss Coutts should have so carefully preserved Dickens's letters to Mrs. Brown and put them with her own. The series to Miss Coutts fits with the one to Mrs. Brown. Surely they are both complete.

The next letter, in fact, was addressed to them both. It was a reply to their enquiries after they had heard of his narrow escape in the Staplehurst railway disaster. It is significant, however, that it says he meant to call on Miss Coutts to thank her as soon as he should be in London. The friendship was not completely broken.

And yet the very last letter we have was merely a formal one written on behalf of someone she knew slightly, and who was a tutor to Dickens's youngest son, and who evidently thought he had some hope of a colonial bishopric if she would give him her support. Since she had some influence in such affairs after her benefactions to the bishoprics of Adelaide, Cape Town and British Columbia, Dickens wrote to ask her help. The letter was apparently the last he sent her; it included no personal message; and the envelope shows that he was uncertain whether or not she was in town. Even two years later when she was one of the two executors of Dickens's old friend, Chauncey Hare Townshend (to whom Dickens had first introduced her) they apparently exchanged no further letters. Yet Dickens had been made Townshend's literary executor; he had been bequeathed a legacy of £1,000; and he must have been consulted about his friend's affairs. But although Miss Coutts seems carefully to have kept a letter that Dickens wrote from America to Townshend's solicitor (Edward Jackson), asking him to seal up and reserve his private

papers until his return, they appear never to have written to each other again.[1]

No good reason is known except that their friendship was dead. Almost all these last letters show how pathetically isolated Dickens felt from his former friends; how moved he was at any reassurance of their affection; and yet how he still held something in reserve which prevented their full reconciliation. The break had obviously come directly after Dickens's separation from his wife, when it was natural that Mrs. Dickens should have turned to Miss Burdett-Coutts to act as an intermediary. Yet what still remains strange is that the result of her attempts to interpose should have been that her old friendship for Dickens should cease, even though on his part he was always ready to see it renewed.

There are a number of obvious explanations, none of which carry complete conviction. It might be assumed that, whatever the truth about the separation, she assumed the worst and decided to show her disapproval of Dickens's conduct by dropping him socially. Or it may be that she was so shocked at his bitter intolerance of his wife, that she could no longer find pleasure in his company. Yet neither of these reasons explains how she can even have hoped to reconcile the couple two years after they had broken apart, or why Mrs. Brown should apparently have looked on his faults with much greater lenience. It was not as if she particularly cared for Mrs. Dickens. Years later, we are told, she used to speak of her " with the gentle sarcasm she often used in referring to members of her own sex . . . ' 'Poor dear Mrs. Dickens' were the terms in which she always referred to that lady: and anyone who knew the Baroness soon learned that the use of the epithets 'poor dear' implied disparagement." The explanations that have been given may be partly true; but they are too simple, and they leave too much out. The difficulty of understanding all this about Dickens is that we know too little of Miss Coutts: for none of the later estimates of her life (written by those who never knew her until it was almost over) are of any help in understanding her as she was thirty or forty years before.

Nevertheless, however little is known of her character, something at least is shown by the chief events of her life. Some of these may be mentioned. The most remarkable was her marriage, at the age of sixty-seven, to a young man of twenty-eight. She was not, in the least, the strong-minded, imperious great lady that some authorities have described. She had a certain will and determination; considerable intelligence but little sense of judgement; and great wealth but not great ability. Her reserve and hesitation appear to have been signs of self-distrust and weakness. Above all, she was always dependent on others.

During the lifetime of Mrs. Brown, her governess, she was content to remain secure in her companionship; and as a young

[1] The Jacksons were a family of solicitors who had offices in Wisbech and London. Townshend's collection of manuscripts, including that of *Great Expectations*, was bequeathed to the Wisbech Literary Institute; his precious stones went to the Department of Science and Art and are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum; and, after other bequests, the remainder of his estate was left to endow a school for the education of poor children in London. This may have been the reason for Miss Coutts's appointment as an executor. In 1901 the Townshend School was amalgamated with one she had founded herself, also in Westminster: she treated his foundation as if it were her own in rather a high-handed manner; and it resulted in an unpleasant dispute.

[2] In the chapter on Dickens, British Museum, Add. MSS. 46402-8.

and attractive heiress she is known to have rejected several suitors. It is said that when Miss Coutts inherited her fortune in 1837, Mrs. Brown even postponed her marriage in order to remain beside her at a time when she would be compelled to take up new responsibilities. After the death of Miss Coutts's father, Sir Francis Burdett, Mrs. Brown and her husband certainly came to live with Miss Coutts at her house in Stratton Street. It was a few years later that Miss Burdett-Coutts proposed marriage to the Duke of Wellington, who replied tenderly that although he did not look on himself as an old man, he would be very shortly; and that such a union could only bring unhappiness and disappointment. Although still active and vigorous, he was then aged seventy-eight. Miss Coutts was an affectionate person who wanted companionship but who was afraid to give up her independence. Her wealth made it difficult for her to live a normal life. The only men she felt at ease with were those who were so eminent that she could be sure that fortune-hunting was beneath them. It was better still if they were already married.

It is not improbable that Miss Burdett-Coutts felt a greater affection for Dickens than she was willing to admit either to herself or anyone else. Her proposals to the Duke and to Mr. Ashmead Bartlett (the secretary) both show that she deeply felt the need for companionship, and yet that she preferred the relation to be one which went no further than mutual affection and confidence. Nevertheless she valued such a friendship highly, and would have suffered the loss with equal intensity. There is no special reason to think that she regarded herself as a champion of public morality, for she evidently kept her feelings to herself.[1] She may well, therefore, have been sufficiently hurt by suddenly learning of Dickens's infatuation for a young girl—Miss Ellen Ternan—to find herself unable to meet him on the old terms of friendship. She could accept his wife, but not another woman.

Neither of them may have frankly recognised this as the real reason: their difference, if it was ever an open one, was never referred to in their correspondence. Yet it might account for each of them retaining an affection for each other without still wishing to meet; it suggests a reason why Mrs. Brown still wrote to Dickens occasionally, and why they seem to have been on easier terms than ever while Miss Coutts kept silent. It perhaps explains her sudden and uncharacteristic display of sympathy for Mrs. Dickens whose feelings she was able to share for the first time. Dickens, indeed, may well have perceived the reasons behind her action; his letters show that while he wanted her to know that he was willing to renew their friendship, he saw that it would be against her wish. It may also explain the terms in which Dickens

[1] Public morality: never easy to estimate, but it was an age when appearances were respected at least as much as conduct. It was partly this which so scandalised Queen Victoria, when the "extraordinary and dreadful" marriage of Miss Coutts to Mr. Ashmead at last took place. Miss Coutts had never been sheltered from scandal. Her father had had a well-known *liaison* with Lady Oxford; Sir James Brooke openly refers to an illegitimate son in his letters to Miss Coutts. Her elder brother Robert led an irregular life, and Osborne speaks of him as a "man of odd habits and doubtful character." Her sister, Mrs. Trevannion, married an adventurer. Her grandfather was alleged (with some reason) to have taken Harriot Mellon as his mistress before he married her and left her his fortune, which was eventually passed on to Miss Coutts. It would not be surprising if all this deterred her from matrimony; and it may also help to account for her determined intervention when she saw Dickens's marriage breaking up.

wrote, and how they all professed to look back to the past with regret; why Dickens constantly insisted that everything was still as it had always been, that the old times were not forgotten, and that he constantly lived over the years that lay behind them.

If these conjectures are justified, they suggest how much isolated and more unhappy Dickens was than we may sometimes realise in his later life, and how he felt his isolation. Only as his friendship with Miss Burdett-Coutts ended did they begin to realise how strong the feelings had been which once drew them together and then relentlessly forced them apart.

WHEN THE WINE MERCHANT WROTE TO DICKENS:

THE DICKENS-ELLIS CORRESPONDENCE

By N. C. Peyrouton

ANTICIPATED thirty-seven years ago, appropriately enough between the green covers of an issue of this self-same periodical, was a genesis for the short history that follows. Perhaps a few of the present-day subscribers may even remember having read the original of the notice from which I quote below when it appeared first, an innocent item in the "When Found" miscellany:

> A very interesting pamphlet has just been issued by Charles Ellis and Co., Wine Merchants, of Brickhill Lane, London, which they call "A Link with Dickens" . . . it contains six facsimile letters of Dickens to Messrs. Ellis and Co., who were his wine merchants for many years. The present proprietors have long known this was so, but it was not until recently that the series of letters reproduced was discovered, and being proud of once having had so distinguished a client, are naturally anxious to make it known . . .[1]

The notice concluded felicitously with Editor Matz reporting the firm's offer to supply complimentary copies of this "wine list" to readers of *The Dickensians*.

Subsequently, the House of Ellis, apparently satisfied with the initial response to their experiment in novelty advertising, not only frequently reissued the pamphlet over a number of years, but were inspired to dig deeper into the firm's archives to discover five additional letters, raising to eleven the number appearing in the later reissues.

No more ambitious collection or publication was attempted of the Dickens-Ellis correspondence until 1937-38, when the texts of these eleven letters together with four others appeared in the three-volume *Nonesuch Letters*, edited by Walter Dexter.

But the reference above to *the* Dickens-Ellis correspondence should, perhaps, be qualified. Actually, there is no editorial acknowledgement of a connection between Joseph Ellis (whom Dexter properly but simply assumes to be the proprietor of the

[1] *The Dickensian*, Vol. XX, January 1924, 6.

Bedford Hotel, Brighton) and Charles Ellis (to whom all but two of the letters are addressed). Moreover, beyond the inference drawn from his single indexing of the name Charles Ellis, there is no single identity recognised for the Star and Garter proprietor and the London wine merchant. We are left to draw a conclusion from internal evidence which, however strong, is not conclusive.

The fifteen letters to the Ellises are but feebly supported by scattered references to the Ellises in Dickens's letters to other

Joseph Ellis

From *Illustrated London News*, August 1st, 1891

correspondents.[1] Indeed, the earliest *Nonesuch* reference (*N*, I, 192) is not from a letter but is, rather, the whole of Dickens's diary entry for June 22nd, 1839. A memorandum, it reads:

> Star and Garter, Richmond, Literary Fund,
> 5 o'clock exactly.

The ten years following remain undocumented. Not one of the several letters that must have been exchanged between the author and his frequent hosts during this period appears to have survived. This is extraordinary considering that the Star and Garter became from the *Nickleby* days onward one of Dickens's favourite haunts. During these years it was witness to several Dickens's wedding anniversary dinners and the *Clock* Dinner. Throughout the 'forties

[1] T. Yeats Brown (1850); Benjamin Webster (1857); Georgina Hogarth (1868).

the Richmond hostelry served often as a convenient retreat to which Boz might repair from Devonshire Terrace when he required a day or two of peace and quiet.

The earliest letter extant (*N*, II, 154-55) is that of May 21st, 1849, to Charles Ellis. This is followed by a sequence of eleven[1] from the 'fifties: nine to Charles and two to Joseph. Correspondence in the 'sixties is represented by only three[2] letters—all to Charles. But with a single exception (of which more later) this published correspondence is of very minor consequence. It testifies that Dickens was somewhat of a connoisseur of liquors; that he had confidence in Charles Ellis's judgement in wines and was not often disappointed; and, finally, that he appreciated the quality of the tables set by the Ellises at their two establishments

The Star and Garter, Richmond

Dickens House Collection

in Brighton and Richmond respectively. There is very little here to suggest that theirs was otherwise than the usual quasi-personal business association and relationship characteristic with Dickens in such circumstances. The " single exception " suggested a more dramatic climax to the history of Dickens's patronage of the Ellises but, by itself, no more than this. A " Final " link with Dickens, a link that Ellis's successors, the wine merchants of Brickhill Lane, could not have suspected, remained to be provided by some interesting bits of unpublished Dickens-Ellis correspondence and the results of investigation into the history of the Ellis family.

* * * * *

Dickens was known to and, probably, personally acquainted with three generations of Ellises: a grandfather, identified simply

[1] Dec. 16th, '51; Feb. 5th, '52*; Nov. 30th, '52*; Dec. 16th, '53; Dec. 23rd, '53; Mar. 13th, '54; May 1st, '55; Dec. 17th, '57; April 16th, '58; Jan. 8th, '59; Jan. 15th, '59. Asterisk indicates letter to Joseph.

[2] April 23rd, '60; (fragment) May 8th, '61; Sept. 4th, '63.

as a Mr. Ellis who may have helped his son in his business;[1] the father, Joseph; and his three sons Joseph, Charles, and George.

The father, Joseph, born July 8th, 1783,[2] was still a young man in the decade following Waterloo when he established a number of successful businesses in Richmond and the vicinity. Perhaps the most successful of these, most certainly the one through which the family first became known to Dickens, was the Star and Garter Hotel. Just one hundred years old when the author of *Nickleby* came to it in 1838-39, it had been acquired in 1822 by Joseph Ellis who had greatly enlarged the structure and made many other improvements in the facilities.[3] Under Ellis's ownership-management it was already beginning to assume the unique character that belied its hitherto relatively undistinguished history. Encouraged by his success with the hostelry, in 1831 Ellis opened a wineshop[4] which he ran apart from the hotel.

By 1845, more likely a few years before, the father had been joined in his enterprises by his sons Joseph, age 30 (born August 14th, 1815[5]), Charles, age 21 (born 1824) and George, probably not much younger than Charles. The family was now one of considerable substance. In the *Post Office Directory of the Six Home Counties* [1845] there is an appropriately impressive quadruple listing:

Ellis, Joseph & Sons, Star & Garter hotel, Richmond hill
Ellis, Joseph & Sons, Castle hotel, Hill st.
Ellis, Joseph & Sons, wine merchants (agents to Prince Metternich), Hill st.
Ellis, Joseph & Sons, " The Castle " posting & job yard, postmasters to Her Majesty, Hill st.

By 1844-45 the running of the Star and Garter seems to have been left to Charles and George while Joseph took over the management of a new acquisition: the Bedford Hotel in Brighton.[6] Dickens's letters to Joseph suggest that by 1852 the author was a frequenter of that house whenever circumstances favoured a visit.

Joseph (the son, not the father) continued at the Bedford until 1864-65 at which time a Mr. Edwin Taylor succeeded him as its secretary and manager.[7] Joseph, the father, had died seven years before, on June 15th, 1858,[8] in his seventy-fifth year but, even so,

1 From notes of lecture by A. A. Barkas, courtesy of Richmond Central Library.
2 Boase, *Modern English Biography* (1912), V, 222.
3 Beginning as a humble tavern in 1738 under the proprietorship of John Christopher, by 1803 it had become the property of the Earl of Dysart who, in turn, leased the hotel to Richard Brewer. Under this gentleman the establishment failed to prosper and was closed for five years. But the Star and Garter had presumably already some notoriety as one of the Misses Berry mentioned, the suspension in a letter to Horace Walpole. In 1809, the hotel was reopened by A. C. Crean, cook to the Duke of York, and it was from his widow, who carried on the business for a while after his death, that Joseph Ellis took over. Richmond Central Library, *op. cit.*
4 *A Link with Dickens.* I have seen two editions of this pamphlet. One, titleless, incorporates a wine list and includes only three letters; the other entitled " When Dickens Wrote His Wine Merchant " is not as conspicuously commercial, includes all eleven letters. Each emphatically affirms 1831 as the date for the establishment of the company.
5 Boase, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
6 Under Bedford Hotel, *Leppard's Directory* lists Charles Turpin in 1843, Charles Ellis in 1845-46. *Kelley's Directory* lists Joseph Ellis in 1845. From this it would appear that originally, at least, this was a new adjunct of the family business and not an independent venture of Joseph's.
7 *Kelley's Directories*, the years 1846-64. This last seems to have been a fateful year for the Ellises. In 1864 the Star and Garter was taken over by a limited company and, although Charles and George memorialised the event by planting two poplar trees on the hotel grounds, this apparently marked the end of their long association with the place. (See Ellis's letter to Dickens, February 12th, 1870.)
8 Boase, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

his son Joseph does not appear to have assumed any responsibility for the London-Richmond ends of the business. Rather, the following year, 1859, he became senior partner in a wine business of his own, ELLIS AND HAMBLIN, which by 1866, the year of Ellis's retirement from the Bedford, had become ELLIS AND WILSON, 6 and 7 Preston Street.[1] Busy as he seems to have been these years with his commercial interests, Joseph concentrated more of his attention upon establishing himself as a leading spirit of the Brighton Literary Society.[2] And however modest his literary talents may have been they were fully as legitimate a part of the Ellis patrimony as his old place in the firm of Joseph Ellis & Sons. Had not his father published his own *Sonnet to John Britton* in 1843[3] while brother Charles, to celebrate his coming of age, had followed two years later with *Richmond, and other poems* ? For twenty-five years he maintained a residence at Hampton Lodge, Hampton Road, in Brighton, but from 1888 until his death in July 1891[4] he was more often to be found at The Monks, Balcombe, near Cuckfield, Sussex.[5] Joseph's recognition as author came rather late in life. The most avowedly literary member of the family, he published only two rather insignificant volumes of verse.[6]

But the real hero of our history and of the Ellis correspondence was the second son, Charles, who appears to have taken over headship of the family enterprises during his father's lifetime. Indeed, Charles was clearly the most favoured of this third generation of Ellises. While inheriting a giant share of the family business acumen he seems not to have been denied an equal measure of its artistic propensities. Even as he was the first to follow his father into print—not too modest to publish his youthful effusions—so he continued with as much persistence and nearly as much success as his brother Joseph in pursuit of the muse.

To a second, more serious excursion into the world of letters the "single exception" aforementioned—the fragment of the letter of May 8th, 1861 (*N*, III, 218)—testifies. The whole of Dickens's response, although probably kinder and certainly more qualified than is attested here, must have been a blow:

> . . . the growth and treatment of several kinds of wine formed the subject of a series of papers in *Household Words* which renders it unlikely that the subject will soon be resumed here . . .

It seems obvious that Ellis had hoped the merit of his MS. —he was writing on a subject he knew well—and the long acquaintanceship with the Editor of *All the Year Round*, together or singly would ensure a favourable reception for his work. Still, Ellis appears to have accepted the rejection with good heart, contenting himself with a private printing of his paper.[7]

1 *Kelley's Directory.*
2 Boase, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
3 The British Museum Catalogue lists: BRITTON (John), F.S.A. Friendship's Offering . . . Sonnet to John Britton (by Joseph Ellis, of Richmond), with a portrait. Topographical essay on the author's residence (by J. Britton). R. Fisher: London, 1843, 8 pp.
4 Boase, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
5 *Kelley's Directories*, the years 1866-1893.
6 Boase lists: *Meletae: Poems*, 1869; *Caesar in Egypt, Costanza, and other Poems*, 1876, 3rd ed., 1886.
7 The British Museum Catalogue lists: ELLIS (Charles) of Richmond. The origin, nature and history of wine . . . a lecture. London, 1861.

As for Dickens—he continued to order as before from one of his favourite wine merchants, Charles Ellis & Company, and continued to dine at the Star and Garter on special occasions or when he wished to give dinners to guests in London.

And so this history might have ended—without a "Final" link. But it was not to be. Early in 1870 a disastrous fire at the Star and Garter furnished the occasion for another, the last, exchange between the author and his erstwhile host at the hotel. Fortunately, both an original draft of the Ellis letter and Dickens's reply have survived.[1] Each speaks for itself:

7 Belgrave Mansions
Grosvenor Gardens
12th February 1870

Dear Sir,

I can little more than wonder whether in the history of past years your visits to the Star & Garter, Richmond hill created for you any lasting affection for the old place and if that is so whether you would care to record any incidents of its past life. I make bold to intrude upon you because the Star & Garter was unique and its individuality (without one responsible head) is as much passed away as the ancient structure itself is. I suppose there was no place and is no place where so much joyousness with decorum could be found—where the first nobility proud as England' nobility is and even royalty assembled with the respectable well-to-do citizens so entirely without offence to either and where the most brilliant of men in every distinguished walk of life resorted not only of English but of all countries renowned in the world. The Kings and Queens of Europe met there—and many great men called it "home" for a little or longer while.

During the whole time of its being the property of my family for more than forty years its capabilities continued to expand as well as the magnitude of the business—it was a little world in itself—besides the usual complements of domestic servants it supported a cabinet maker, carpenter, engineers, blacksmiths and bricklayer, painter, plumber and glazier all on the permanent staff, it had produce gardens and fields, cows, pigs, poultry—artesian water well—Laundries, workshops of all kinds—supplying under ordinary circumstances, all its needs. My father was the architect of the whole in its development during 36 of those forty years.

Some further particulars might be interesting if you felt disposed to take account of it, but I need not trouble you with more now and remain dear Sir,

With great respect
Your long obliged servant
Charles Ellis

[1] The author's collection. Preserved with these are two business notes, ordering wine. The earlier is dated January 19th, 1859 and is written by Dickens's daughter Mary; the other, dated July 29th, 1869, is in Dickens's own hand.

To Charles Dickens Esq.
&c. &c. &c.

To which the Editor of *All the Year Round* replied the next business day on his personal, Gads Hill stationery:

5 Hyde Park Place W.
Monday Fourteenth February
1870

Dear Mr. Ellis

I considered the subject of the Star and Garter, with a reference to *All the Year Round*, at the time of the fire. But placed it in the category of topics which the newspapers anticipate, and the general interest in which has passed before they can be dealt with in a literary journal that must always be at press two weeks in advance,

Faithfully yours
Charles Dickens

Charles Ellis Esquire

It would be interesting to know if the would-be contributor pursued the matter further—perhaps offering his article to other periodicals. Howsoever that may be, Ellis's regard for Dickens, even after this second "rebuff," did not at all diminish. If this preservation of correspondence be not enough there are two other items[1] to serve as significant witness to that fact. One is a menu card of the Farewell Banquet to Charles Dickens, Esq., Saturday, November 2nd, 1867, which was catered by Freemason's Tavern Co., Limited. [It is not known how Ellis came to have this—possibly the wine merchant knew Charles Gosden, the Manager of Freemason's, and received it from him as a memento.] The other is a copy of Dean Stanley's *Sermon on the Funeral of Charles Dickens*, annotated by Ellis. He appears to have taken special exception to the way in which the Dean of Westminster had drawn parallels between the character and purpose of divine and profane literature, suggesting the first required the second as its supporting auxiliary; to his inferences that Christ's human personality might restrict his divine; and, finally, to his attempts at identification and appropriation of Dickens's brand of Christianity as singularly like that of the Broad Church party (of which the Dean was himself a leader and most prominent spokesman).

The year after Dickens's death, in 1871, Charles Ellis gave up all his connections in Richmond, retaining only a business at College Hill, London, which in 1880, to make his retirement complete, was also relinquished.[2] Ellis, twelve years Dickens's junior, survived his client and patron by nearly forty years. He died two days after the ninety-sixth anniversary of the author's birth, February 9th, 1908, at Newe-Place, Bath, at the age of 84.[3]

* * * * *

To Messrs. William J. Carlton and John Greaves, to the Brighton Public Libraries and the Richmond Central Library, who generously co-operated in the preparation of this article, I am indebted and proffer herewith my grateful acknowledgement.

1 The author's collection.
2 Richmond Central Library, *op. cit.*
3 Newspaper, Richmond Central Library.

"THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF CHARLES DICKENS"

By Mons. Sylvère Monod
(Professor of English, Caen University)

At the Dinner in Celebration of the 149th Anniversary of the Birth of Charles Dickens, at the Piccadilly Hotel, London, February 7th, 1961.

LADIES and Gentlemen: Surely I cannot do better, at the outset of this little speech, than to quote the words of our mutual friend Charles Dickens, when he addressed the General Theatrical Fund Dinner on the 25th of March, 1850, in the following words:

"Gentlemen" (as you know, there were only gentlemen diners in those days; Dickens often protested and fought against this barbarous restriction energetically, perhaps because he felt the loss more keenly than some of his contemporaries did) . . . "Gentlemen, I now come to the toast which I have to propose to you. I shall not express, as I ought according to all precedent, my sorrow that it has not fallen into better hands; for, although it might easily have done that, I am exceedingly glad to hold it in mine, as it gives me the opportunity of publicly rendering my little tribute . . ."

I find that, once again, Dickens has admirably expressed, once for all, the somewhat mixed and complex feelings that have been, are, and shall be experienced by many people in similar circumstances.

But, instead of making my own "little tribute" too general, I shall now endeavour to remember that some of you may already have heard in the past a few words devoted to the praise of Dickens, or to the praise of his writings, or again to the praise of that elusive phenomenon called his genius, about which I entirely agree with G. K. Chesterton, when he speaks of "the unquestionable thing about Dickens, the thing called genius; the thing that everyone has to talk about directly and distinctly, because no one knows what it is."

So that perhaps I had better offer you something more unusual from this place, and that is a specifically *French* tribute to Dickens, the tribute of a French Dickensian. In other words, I propose to explain what it's like to be a French Dickensian, or what Dickens means in the life of such a person.

There is still another thing that I shall try to keep in mind, and again it was a thing already alluded to by Dickens himself in his famous Knebworth speech, in 1865, when he said: "Ladies and gentlemen" (it was not a dinner—only light refreshments went round—so ladies could be safely allowed to join in), "Ladies and gentlemen . . . it was said by a very sagacious person: 'Life is short, and why should speeches be long?'" (the report in Dr. Fielding's admirable edition of the *Speeches* has "*Laughter*" here, and Dickens went on to say that this was "an aphorism so sensible under all circumstances, and particularly in these circumstances.") Well, I shall not lose sight of the paramount importance of brevity. But I must not insist on this, because, if I were to

point out all the advantages of brevity, it would take me at least three hours.

The first statement I shall make about the position of the French Dickensian is that to be one is a very full-time job. It makes absorbing demands on one's time, in the form, for instance, of requests for lectures, talks, editions and translations, critical articles or even books, prefaces and reviews without end. There are moments when one feels that the only adequate Dickensian would be or ought to be a man like Dickens himself, a man who could not only accomplish his own tasks with immense gusto, but would also perform everybody else's job around him with fierce energy and relentless efficiency. Only a man who could at one and the same time write *David Copperfield*, keep order in his large and crowded home, launch *Household Words* and run Urania Cottage, only such a man –or such a superman–—could cope with all the demands made on the Dickensian's energy, and still find a few odd spare moments to devote to being a professor of English in a French University.

An absorbing task, therefore, being a French Dickensian is also a task of absorbing interest. And there isn't an atom of complaint in the description I have just given. The job would be enough to keep a hundred men busy, but it would also keep them all delightfully and boisterously happy.

Yet, this I believe to be true of all Dickensians the whole world over; there is probably less competition in France than prevails among the English-speaking peoples of the earth, but that is the occasion for a difference in degree, not in kind, between the activities of the British or American Dickensian and those of the Dickensian abroad.

So that I must now come to what really characterises the French Dickensian, to what distinguishes, first all foreign Dickensians and then, more specifically the Frenchman, from their English-speaking counterparts.

I shall say that, compared with the English or American Dickensian, the foreigner enjoys one immense privilege, but labours under one crushing difficulty.

The joy and the pride of the foreign Dickensian is that he can make Dickens known, or, at any rate, better known, to ever-increasing groups of readers. I have sometimes wondered whether an English student and commentator of Dickens might not wish to raise somewhere an impenetrable fortress, in the depths of which he could make sure that no beam of Dickenslore could filter. There he would have a score or so of doomed creatures brought up with every comfort and luxury of life but one, I mean brought up in total Dickenslessness—an almost complete darkness and blindness of the mind. This would be for the purpose of one day having an audience to whom he could *reveal* Dickens. For indeed, how could one in this country, in this city for instance, keep children from inhaling Dickens with every breath of London air they breathe, from being nurtured on Dickens with every crust of London bread or every drop of London milk they munch or suck. Of Dickenslore in Dickensland couldn't one say what Dickens himself once wrote of something far less wholesome and

pleasurable, that it is " inborn and inbred " (you have all recognized, Ladies and Gentlemen, the description of Spontaneous Combustion at the end of Chapter XXXII in *Bleak House* !). So the British Dickensian cannot spring Dickens as a delightful surprise on unprepared readers. He can only explain, comment, elucidate, analyse and illuminate the life and the works . . . and he does so, I hasten to add, brilliantly and efficiently. But he can never reveal Dickens to people who knew nothing of or about him before. Not so the French, or other foreign Dickensian. In non-English-speaking countries there is no need to build a fortress. The fortress already exists; it is the fortress, or at least the barrier of language. It would be difficult to imagine people more emphatically, almost positively non-English-speaking than a fair proportion of my fellow-countrymen are. The fraction who can read such an intensely English writer as Dickens in the original is rather distressingly small. In addition to the totally ignorant, the French Dickensian may sometimes be lucky enough to appeal to a wider circle, with the translation of a tale that had never been rendered into French before, or that had been done so badly or so long ago that the extant translation is nowhere to be found, or is even worse than nothing at all. There is for instance a curious version of *David Copperfield* by Amédée Pichot, whose acquaintance Dickens had made in Paris. The book is entitled —ingeniously enough—*Le Neveu de ma tante*, but in it a simple phrase like " Mr. Dick looked up," instead of becoming " M. Dick leva les yeux," finds itself considerably embellished and becomes a long sentence meaning " Mr. Dick raised his eyes towards Him who is the supreme judge of all our actions and all our thoughts." A pious fraud, if ever there was one, rather than a translation as we now understand it !

The field is therefore wide that is open to the French Dickensian for his work of disclosure; and I certainly need not expatiate on the delights of such work to an audience like the present.

On the other hand the English or American Dickensian does not have, like his French compeer, to undergo the throes of translating the works of our favourite author. I should have dearly liked to insist a little on this point, because it is one that I happen to know well and that I am keenly interested in. In fact the problems of rendering Dickens into French have long been part of my daily life, and, whenever I touch on that topic I immediately experience the refreshing and rather novel sensation of—for once—talking about something that I do know. Still the problems I am referring to are probably too technical to be mentioned at any length before such a festive table. I shall therefore content myself with giving one example and one figure. The example is a very famous sentence from *David Copperfield*. Could anything be less French and lend itself less readily to rendering into French than the following description of Mrs. Crupp:

" Mrs. Crupp, who had been incessantly smiling to express sweet temper, and incessantly holding her head on one side to express a general feebleness of constitution, and incessantly rubbing her hands to express a desire to be of service to all

deserving objects, gradually smiled herself, one-sided herself, and rubbed herself out of the room."

When I add that I have already translated some five thousand pages of Dickens—that is the figure—that I still find him more difficult to translate than any other English writer—with the single, but not insignificant, exception of Shakespeare—it will perhaps be taken as a tribute to the toughness of the French race that I am not dead, nor quite grey-haired as yet. And it will certainly be taken as an amazing tribute to the freshness and power of Dickens's genius that I am more than ever in love with the books I have translated, and that I have even loved my labour, hard as it was, while I was doing it.

The position of a French Dickensian, therefore, I have come to regard as exhilarating even though it can sometimes prove excruciating as well. But it is also something infinitely better than either, for it is one of the most rewarding tasks that can be contemplated by a scholar. When I speak of its rewards I am not thinking—or, to be quite frank, I am not thinking solely—of the financial aspect of the question. One could of course emulate Dickens's own candour when he wrote to his fiancée announcing that he had decided to close in with the offer of writing *Pickwick*: "The work will be no joke, but the emolument is too tempting to resist," but that—in either case—would be only one side of the picture. For the work is often as wholesome as a hilarious joke, while the emolument . . . varies greatly in adequacy. But the work is rewarding in another and in a nobler sense also, in that there is a ready response of most French readers to Dickens. It would be silly to generalise and certainly not all French readers react favourably to all Dickens's writings; for instance, there is a marked tendency of the French to be, to my taste, all too enthusiastic about *A Tale of Two Cities*; while our national admiration of *Pickwick* falls deplorably short of the mark. The latter wonderful book is not easily enjoyed in my country, whereas the former, in spite—or because—of the tense artificiality of so many of its parts and the almost trashiness of some of its melodrama, seems closer in many ways to the French temper. Still, about *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations*, and, to a minor extent, *Oliver Twist* and *Our Mutual Friend*, there can hardly exist two opposite critical opinions, or two drastically different degrees of enjoyment, no matter on which side of the Channel one happens to have been born.

The task of translating Dickens is therefore, I think, eminently worth while, since Dickens, in spite of his prodigious Englishness, does appeal to the French reading public. But I find myself giving reasons and looking for justifications for doing what I have done, as though I had enjoyed any free choice in the matter, as though I had not been merely obeying an irresistible impulse. In fact, I once gave a talk about the impossibility of translating Dickens into French, but the conclusion of it was that, to me, there were two rival impossibilities, the impossibility of translating and the impossibility of not translating Dickens into French, and that the second was far and away the more compelling of the two.

To account for the appeal of Dickens to French readers, some reasons could easily enough be discovered, some are even fairly obvious, since the art of Dickens has several universally appealing aspects, that are bound to be appreciated and enjoyed anywhere, like his astounding knowledge of the child's mind and soul or his vivid sympathy with most forms of human suffering. Other aspects, such as his satire, part of his pathos, and expecially his humour, are more characteristically indigenous. The ways in which those things convey themselves to a French mind are mysterious enough. But in a circle like the present, where each person's very presence is abundant evidence that he or she feels the potent spell of Dickens's genius, where everyone truly loves Dickens, we shall not be tempted to cavil at the discovery that there are, in that highly disconcerting country beyond the Channel, numberless Frenchmen who read his works eagerly. We shall not express surprise at the existence of admiration and gratitude towards Dickens anywhere.

To conclude, I should like to add that, if I have often found being a French Dickensian rewarding, I have never, no, never, found it so rewarding as I do tonight, when it has won me a position of which I can truly say that I am at once immensely proud to hold it and humbly grateful to the friends whose kind indulgence has conferred it upon me. I shall therefore quote one more of Dickens's speeches, and say, in the words spoken by the novelist exactly a hundred and eighteen years ago in an American city:

" Gentlemen, I thank you again, and once again, and many times to that. You have given me a new reason for remembering this day which is already one of mark in my calendar . . ."

". . . it being," Dickens himself added, "my birthday"; " it being," we can all say, " His birthday," with special emphasis on the His !

And now there only remains for me the pleasant and, believe me, Ladies and Gentlemen, the very memorable duty of inviting you all to join me in drinking to " The Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I was rather surprised to find in B. Gillenson's article " Dickens in Russia," in the Winter Number of *The Dickensian*, so much unqualified praise of Ivasheva's book. This work, rather voluminous and containing slips of the memory and slips of the pen in proportion, stands low in the esteem of our Dickensians, not only because of its many inaccuracies and mis-statements, but, first and foremost, because of the author's avowed tendency to look for and to find all kind of weakness and " limitation " in the work of Dickens—a tendency which goes contrary to our (both readers and specialists on history of literature) attitude and is, in fact, perfectly inacceptable.

K. Katarsky

Moscow, U.S.S.R.

THE GUILD HOUSES AT STEVENAGE

Reproduced by kind permission of The Editor of The Hertfordshire Express

The above two houses, " Oakfields " and " Woodlands," were built at Stevenage nearly one hundred years ago, on land given by Lord Lytton, following the incorporation of the Guild of Literature and Art. Funds amounting to several thousand pounds were collected for this project from the proceeds of performances of Dickens and his amateur actors of various plays, including *Not So Bad As We Seem*, a comedy specially written by Bulwer-Lytton, first produced at Devonshire House before Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, and subsequently in the provinces.

The Earl of Lytton, in his book about his grandfather, says that the object of this scheme was the endowment of a literary guild to serve as a sort of College and Home of Rest in the country for authors and artists who were prevented by poverty from producing really good work.

The houses were never put to their intended use and in 1897 the Guild was dissolved by Act of Parliament and its endowment partioned between the Royal Literary Fund and the Artists' Benevolent Institution. In 1901 the properties were disposed of by private sale and in 1956, a lease of the houses was granted to the W.V.S. for accommodation of Hungarian refugees.

Before very long the houses will be demolished to make room for the development of the New Town.

[*For the information contained above the Editor is indebted to Mr. G. B. Dawson, Resident Agent for Knebworth Estates and to the " Hertfordshire Express " article by The Abbott in the January 27th issue.*] J.G.

THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER AND THE ROYAL COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' SCHOOLS

By W. H. Drayton

"GENTLEMEN, we should remember tonight that we are all travellers, and that every round we take converges nearer to our home; that all our little journeys bring us together to one certain end; and that the good that we do, and the virtues that we show, and particularly the children that we rear, survive us through the long and unknown perspective of time."

These words were spoken by Charles Dickens towards the end of a loudly applauded speech at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street, in December 1859 when he was presiding over the Festival Banquet of the Commercial Travellers' Schools.

The London Tavern seems to have been a place of some significance in the history of this foundation for it was there in 1845 that John Robert Cuffley, a commercial traveller, inspired many of his colleagues with his vision of a school which would house, feed, clothe and educate the necessitous children of brethren "on the road" who met untimely death, or through illness became unable to earn their livelihood. The outcome of that meeting was the raising of £2,000, a large sum in those days, and the opening of a school in a Georgian mansion in Wanstead, Essex, with 35 children in residence.

One of Cuffley's most ardent supporters in founding the Schools and maintaining them in their early years was a friend of Dickens —George Moore, whose name Dickens said was "a synonym for integrity, enterprise, public spirit and benevolence." Moore became the first Treasurer of the Schools, an office which he held until his death in 1876, and he it was who invited Dickens to preside at the 1859 Festival, to which invitation Dickens replied: "I am so much occupied that I believe nothing less than your note would have induced me to undertake a chairmanship. But I have a great respect for you, and I know what a good and well ordered Society that is in whose behalf you exert yourself. So I am at its, and your disposal . . ."

Wanstead was soon unable to cope with the many calls for the admission of children and land was purchased at Pinner in Middlesex for the building of a new school. The foundation's new buildings were opened by the Prince Consort in 1855, and although they could accommodate many more children than could be housed at Wanstead the number of pupils quickly rose to capacity. After a visit which he paid them Dickens described the Schools as "a great castle of a bright red colour, looking perfectly glorious in the cold sunlight of a winter afternoon" and the young people living there as "healthy, cheerful, easy, and rational, under a system of moral restraint far better than all the physical force that ever crushed a timid nature, and never bent a stubborn one."

Additions and alterations to the buildings were made in successive years until 400 could be accepted under the regulations of the day. But the records of the foundation show that time and

again a widowed mother was left with five, six or even more children totally unprovided for, and there were always more candidates seeking admission than there were places for them. In consequence the mother had the arduous task of canvassing the votes of subscribers in the hope that they would be cast for her son or daughter and ensure the success of her application at the Schools' half-yearly election.

Doubtless Dickens saw the Commercial Travellers' Schools and other charitable foundations which he supported as movements towards a realisation of the ideals which he advocated so forcefully, and particularly those which concerned the welfare of children. A correspondent of the *Pictorial World* (November 2nd, 1878) wrote: " That hater and staunch opponent of all shams —Charles Dickens—took an active interest in these Schools, and several times presided at the anniversary dinners; indeed he

Opening of the Schools at Pinner—Arrival of Prince Consort
Reprinted from "London Illustrated Times"—Nov. 3rd, 1855

adopted his title The Uncommercial Traveller from the fact of his connection with the friends of this institution."

The " Pinner Schools "—as they are affectionately known to hundreds of former scholars—have seen well over 5,000 boys and girls pass through into adult life. Many have achieved outstanding success in medicine, the law and other professions, in Parliament, the Universities, in industry and commerce, and indeed in many walks of life. It is an indication of the esteem in which the Schools are held by former pupils that a very large number join the Old Scholars' Association and give valuable help to the foundation year after year.

Happily, no one now suffers the utter and bitter poverty which the deprived had to endure in the past century, but the Royal Commercial Travellers' Schools (the prefix " Royal " was granted in 1918) still meet a need which the State does not, and for which few County Authorities have any facilities. Today it is often the

case of these Schools being the means of a widowed mother keeping together the home which she and her family are used to by allowing her to take up full-time work as soon as she may be free from any anxiety for the welfare of her children. They will receive a good academic education and close attention will be given to their physical development, for which the Schools have excellent facilities, including many acres of playing-fields, a fine covered and heated swimming bath, and a well-equipped gymnasium. If they are unwell the children will be looked after by a qualified staff in a modern sanatorium. Boys and girls are admitted (without election) from the age of five up to fourteen and normally leave at sixteen, but those who show academic promise enter the Schools' Sixth Form to prepare for entrance to Universities, Training Colleges, and other places of advanced education. Over 200 children are at present in residence.

Charles Dickens, when Festival President, appealed for £5,000 to meet the cost of running the Schools. Today the task of a President of Appeal is more difficult, for the Schools now need over £70,000 a year to maintain them, of which no less than 75 per cent. has to be raised by way of voluntary contributions. No grant is received from the State. Public-spirited men of influence are still sought to lead the Annual Maintenance Appeals, and Mr. Arthur T. Haywood, Joint Managing Director of Electrical Components (Holdings) Limited of Birmingham has generously accepted this important office for the year ending March 31st, 1962. Mr. Haywood hopes to organise a special banquet at once to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Dickens and bring much-needed support to a foundation with which the Uncommercial Traveller was so closely connected. At that banquet the toast will be the same that Dickens proposed: "Success to the Commercial Travellers' Schools."

A GREAT BOOKSELLER[1]

THE compendious account of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach's life and work, written by two of his bookselling staff, contains, as might be expected, a large number of Dickens references. Among these, the ones particularising the late Count Alain de Suzannet's deals and relations with the famous Philadelphian bookseller are of especial interest to the Fellowship he so greatly favoured with his priceless benefactions. We quote the following:

> In March 1932, Comte Alain de Suzannet of Geneva, who had been buying such substantial items from the Doctor as "The Dying Clown", Seymour's last drawing for the *Pickwick Papers* before he committed suicide, for $6,000, and a single page of the *Pickwick* manuscript for $9,000, ordered another packet of Dickens and Thackeray. He was the only man in the world willing to pay Kern prices for Kern-type books. Sensing this, Dr. Rosenbach was able to persuade him to pay $45,000 for 39 pages of the original manuscript of *Nicholas Nickleby*,[2] which he had obtained by private treaty from the White estate.

[1] *Rosenbach, a Biography*, by Edwin Wolf, and with John Fleming; Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 63s. net).

[2] *cf. The Dickensian*, No. 248 (Autumn, 1938).

The " White " was W. A. White, a Brooklyn collector, who on one occasion, as Rosenbach told White's daughter, had " out-Rosenbached Rosenbach " by selling to him for $45,000 a unique copy of the third edition of *Richard II*, 1598, White had bought some 40 years earlier for $438. The " Kern " was none other than Jerome Kern, composer of *Show Boat*, whose valuable collection of modern and eighteenth century authors was auctioned in 1929, " not," as the authors say, " because he needed the money but because he had been bitten by the bull and had contracted marketomania."

" Wednesday night's sale was almost solidly Dickens and the prices were solidly high. Scheuer made his splash and took top honors with $28,000 for a prime *Pickwick* in parts which had cost Kern $3,500." [1]

[1944]. . . . " Dr. Rosenbach sent all the latest book news of the Widener and Drexel sales. At the latter he had bought the manuscript of Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* for the Morgan Library for $17,000.

" When " [in the depression of the 'thirties] " the firm put out a catalogue of original manuscripts, presentation copies, first editions, and autograph letters of " modern " authors—which to Rosenbachs meant not Hemingway or T. S. Eliot but conservative authors from Mark Twain to Masefield—one of the few persons who ordered anything was the Comte de Suzannet. He asked to have a few small items sent to him and then good-humouredly called a slight error of commission to the Doctor's attention. ' I note,' he wrote, ' that 338, Wilde's manuscript of *The Decay of Lying*, is priced $3,400. As I had the pleasure of purchasing this same MS. from you three years ago for $4,750, are you crediting my account with the balance ? ' Dr. Rosenbach answered that everything in the catalogue had been marked down in the same proportion, but, of course, the entry never should have appeared." [It had been entered from a catalogue card which had never been marked sold.] The Doctor was terribly sorry it happened; he crossed his fingers and hoped it would not hurt his relations with Suzannet."

[1935.] "A good wind across the Atlantic filled his sales [*sic*] early in the autumn. Like Rothschild, who had written and received no reply to his initial inquiries about Swift items, the Comte de Suzannet had written for a list of all the Dickens manuscripts, presentation copies, and proofs in the Rosenbach stock. Although he was far from unknown to the Doctor he had received no reply. After six months he wrote again, pleading for the list —and reminding Dr. Rosenbach that, long before, he had promised him photostats of the *Pickwick* manuscript. The earlier letter had come while the Doctor was feeling unwell and disconsolate; the recent one found him buoyantly on the upswing. He did not write; he cabled. Why bother with photostats ? What was Suzannet's best offer for twelve pages of the manuscript ? It would ruin his prize sheaf of *Pickwick* pages to sell any separately, he complained, but, as a special favour, " *you do your best and I will do mine.*" The Swiss [*sic*] collector's best was not bad. The

[1] *The Dickensian*, No. 210 (Spring, 1929).

twelve pages went to Europe and a cheque for $40,000 came to America."

The dealer's best was not so bad either, from the collector's standpoint, for "early in December" (apparently 1928) "Sessler" (another Philadelphian bookseller) "bought a page and a half of the original manuscript of *The Pickwick Papers* for the sum of $9,000." And "two weeks later Dr. Rosenbach paid £7,500 for five pages of the same manuscript, only slightly more per page."

We thus have, recorded in this volume, the following details of purchases of the manuscript of *The Pickwick Papers*:

1928. pp. 1½ (Sessler), £1,875, or £1,250 per page.

1928. pp. 5 (Rosenbach), £7,500, or £1,500 per page.

Some time unspecified before 1933: one page (de Suzannet from Rosenbach), £1,800.

1935. pp. 12 (de Suzannet from Rosenbach), $40,000 (£8,330, or £690 per page).

[1937.] "The Comte de Suzannet came to life with commissions on a number of Dickens's own annotated copies of his reading versions of his own works. His bids of $4,000 apiece for the Dickenses had seemed adequate for the post-Kern era, but proved to be far below the limit of W. T. H. Howe, who went as high as $7,750 for the only known copy of the reading edition of *The Chimes*, crammed with the author's manuscript alterations and additions."

[1946.] "The upsurge of business continued. Suzannet, who belatedly offered his congratulations [on Rosenbach's seventieth birthday, July 22nd, 1946]—'You must be getting younger with the years and I had always thought of you at least ten years my junior (and I had the honour of starting my career on July 22nd, 1882!)'—paid the Doctor $12,000 for 22 more pages of the original manuscript of *Nicholas Nickleby*[1] and the famous rhyming letter to Hicks[2] about *Pickwick*, and another $7,000 for the Dickens-Kolle correspondence, the license granted by the Archbishop of Canterbury for Dickens's marriage with Catherine Hogarth, and the earliest letter in which he mentioned their separation."

The book is rich in authentic and sometimes rather alarming anecdote—for instance, the case of the presentation copy of the third part of Swift's Memoirs of Sir William Temple, supposedly inscribed from the author but actually found, on a comparison of handwriting, to be from the publisher, Benjamin Tooke. "With a humility that was appealing, the Doctor admitted that he must have been wrong and told Rothschild [the purchaser]," 'that in that case he could have the book for a song.' Asked how much a song was, he replied: 'A difficult question! So difficult "that I have found a happy solution which should prove agreeable to both of us. I have decided to present the volume to you with my compliments."' The item had been priced at $2,865.

Rosenbach's bent was for big prices rather than big profits, which, however, inevitably ensued, with rare exceptions. One was the deal which secured to the University of Yale one of the three

[1] *cf. The original manuscript of Nicholas Nickleby*, by Alain de Suzannet, *The Dickensian*, No. 284 (Autumn, 1947). See also *A Great Dickensian*, *The Dickensian*, No. 298 (Spring, 1951).

[2] Bradbury & Evans's master-printer, with whom Dickens was on very friendly terms.

known perfect copies of the Bay Psalm Book, the first book printed in British America. On this Rosenbachs lost $49,900, through a misunderstanding which led the university authorities to treat as a gift what had been intended only as an advance.

A peculiar form of Rosenbach's genial character was his tendency to mask his intellectual prowess by being a "man of the world"—sometimes of the underworld. He would fish, he would drink with impunity his daily bottle of whisky, he would smoke incessantly. He would ruin his health without appearing to ruin it—for he lived to be 76. To an English colleague, a teetotaller, he enlarged after dinner on a peculiar ailment from which he suffered and which necessitated frequent operation—until his guest turned and fled. He was of the eighteenth century, like the historian Gibbon, who, Rosenbach was careful to point out, also suffered from this malady.

A London dealer once told me he had acquired a distaste for book auctions on seeing the Doctor's moist and flabby hands operating on priceless items. This may have been professional jealousy, but the present authors speak of his habit of dropping cigar-ash on open books, regardless of their value. Yet:

> "There was no one who could match Dr. R's intellectual virtuosity when he set out to ingratiate himself. His manner was effortless; the performance flawless. He had an endless supply of biblio-anecdotes which made the volumes he handled come alive, and he had the irresistible enthusiasm of a salesman convinced that what he was selling was better than anything else on the market."

An instance was his reference in 1918 to Marlowe and Nashe's *The Tragedie of Dido Queen of Carthage*, 1594, of which he was offering one of only three known copies: "I know of no more glorious volume in the whole range of English literature."

The wealthy buyer of this not very brilliant tragedy hoped that the price would not cripple him.

One almost prefers to read of his great coup with the Latin American archives which he bought for less than $50,000 and sold shortly afterwards for over $600,000.

A photograph in this book shows Rosenbach talking to President Hoover, also a collector, in an attitude of easy and admiring but confident appraisal. The President beams at the horizon. F.G.

THE PILGRIM EDITION OF *THE LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS*

To facilitate and speed up the work on this publication a third editor, Mr. P. A. W. Collins of the University of Leicester, has joined Mrs. Humphrey House and Mr. Graham Storey.

We have been asked to issue an appeal for the loan of a complete set of *The Dickensian*, also a set of *Nonesuch Letters* (three volumes), to provide Mr. Collins with the necessary material to work on when he is at Leicester during university term-time. The books will be required for a long period—possibly about nine years.

Will anyone able and willing to help please communicate with Mr. Rupert Hart-Davis at 36 Soho Square, London, W.1.

ANDREW LANG— REAL READER OF DICKENS

By Roger Lancelyn Green

"THE real readers of Dickens are very real," writes Mr. Frank A. Gibson on page 28 of *The Dickensian*, No. 333. "One would not include wholly among them the late Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, and certainly not Andrew Lang, who aroused Swinburne's ire." Apparently "Q." is not wholly excluded because, although he complained "of the Dickens plots as mere distractions," he quoted, "All his characters are my personal friends"—and was praised by Swinburne for saying so.

Now why is Andrew Lang certainly not a real reader of Dickens? Mr. Gibson does not tell us, though he suggests that it was because he aroused Swinburne's ire. Swinburne did not like Lang: taking his cue from that master of hysterical criticism, Watts-Dunton went so far as to declare (in Swinburne's presence), "I never knew a man of genius who did not detest Lang." If "detest" simply means that they were riled by his adverse criticisms of their works (or some of them), the Lang-haters also included Thomas Hardy and George Moore, while certain aspects of his writings called forth violent disagreement on the parts of Henry James and Max Beerbohm—but then, to be sure, friends as close as Gilbert Murray and Walter Leaf differed as violently with him over the Homeric problem. But his friends were legion, and he won more tributes of affection both personally and as a writer than fall to the lot of many.

To turn, however, to Lang as Dickensian. Mr. Gibson is doubtless thinking of Swinburne's diatribe against Lang's introductions to the Gadshill Edition in *The Quarterly Review* of July 1902: . . . "the prefatory importunities of a writer disentitled to express and disqualified to form an opinion on the work of an English humorist. The intrusive condescension or adulation of such a commentator was perhaps somewhat superfluous in front of the reprinted Waverley Novels; the offence becomes an outrage, the impertinence becomes impudence when such rubbish is shot down before the doorstep of Charles Dickens."

It may interest Mr. Gibson to look up Lang's reply to this in the *Morning Post* of July 12th, 1902. For outside opinion on Swinburne's attack he may seek *The Academy* of July 19th, 1902: "Mr. Lang's gentle chidings of Dickens may have been a thin and unnecessary *sauce piquante* to the Gadshill banquet, but we are quite unable to discover why they should infuriate a poet who screams the very same objections . . . We can only compare the effect of Mr. Swinburne's prose on our nerves with that of a relentless steam organ braying in wafts of gas-heat."

Lang wrote too much about Dickens to supply much in the way of quotation here—but he had already in his Introduction to the Gadshill Edition offered his excuse for writing there as a critic rather than a mere worshipper. Dickens, he says, "has bequeathed to us an almost unsupportable burden of gratitude, and while I have played the Devil's Advocate, when the part

seemed called for, in this study, it has been *contre-coeur*, and from an odd sense of duty which seemed half undutiful."

As early as 1886, in *Letters to Dead Authors*, Lang had uttered a few gentle chidings over his own difficulty in mastering the plot of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and against the excess of pathos at the deaths of Little Nell and the younger Dombey. But these were no more than freckles on the face of the beloved. " How poor the world of fancy would be," he ends, " how ' dispeopled of her dreams,' if, in some ruin of the social system, the books of Dickens were lost; and if The Dodger, and Charley Bates, and Mr. Creakle, and Miss Squeers, and Sam Weller, and Mrs. Gamp, and Dick Swiveller were to perish, or to vanish with Menander's men and women! We cannot think of our world without them; and, children of dreams as they are, they seem more essential than great statesmen, artists, soldiers, who have actually worn flesh and blood, ribbons and orders, gowns and uniforms."

And in 1912, in his *History of English Literature* published within a few days of his death, Lang was still calling Dickens " a genius so unique that he has, in our literature, no parallel and can never be an example."

For the rest, Lang quotes Dickens probably more frequently than any other author throughout his voluminous writings; he read and re-read the novels times without number, and knew much of the dialogue by heart.

" He and I could keep up a conversation on any subject entirely by quotations from Dickens," wrote Lady Charnwood in *Call Back Yesterday*.

So I maintain that Andrew Lang, even if he did criticise some of the plots, was a real reader of Dickens, and certainly one of the great Dickensians.

Perhaps Mr. Gibson will now elaborate his interesting thesis—with special reference to " Dear Andrew of the brindled hair."

. . . . .

Mr. Gibson writes:

I am sure that all Dickensians (" Dickensites " as Andrew Lang used to say) will be grateful to Mr. Roger Lancelyn Green for his spirited defence of Lang as a " real reader."

Indeed, the trifle of mine to which Mr. Green makes amiable allusion might have been (though actually it was not) prompted by Lang's remark at the beginning of an essay: " ' I cannot read Dickens! ' How many people make this confession, with a front of brass, and do not seem to know how poor a figure they cut! "

But I don't think Swinburne would ever have accepted Mr. Green's exposition; for, as Watts-Dunton wrote: " It was a fancy of his that, though Englishmen are fully alive to the glory of Scottish humour, Scotsmen are often impervious to the humour of the Southron." Writing from The Pines, Putney Hill, in December 1912 (three years after Swinburne's death), Watts-Dunton, the poet's faithful companion, paid tribute to Lang's great and good qualities, and continued:

> " With regard, however, to his criticisms prefixed to the Gadshill edition of Dickens, it was, as in the case of Arnold, inevitable, I think, that they should have roused the indignation

of a Dickensian so enthusiastic as Swinburne. I observe that one eminent critic and student of Dickens, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, has lately said, after doing full justice to Lang's criticisms of Sir Walter Scott, ' nothing could be worse than Lang's introductions to Dickens. They almost deserve the tremendous trouncing they received from Mr. Swinburne.' "

Watts-Dunton added that " Swinburne was a borderer and remained a strong borderer all his life . . . It was as an angry borderer that Swinburne uttered the words about Lang being disqualified to express an opinion on the work of an English humorist." (The furious borderer would, I think, have amused Dickens.) The gibe must have seemed very ungrateful to Lang, because it was the humour of Dickens that he professed to appreciate so much more than the incomparable pathos.

How far these criticisms of the critic, including that from the pen of a brother-Scot, Robertson Nicoll, were justified or justifiable I am totally unable to say, as to the best of my knowledge I have never seen the Gadshill Edition of 1897; but on the present question of readership it may be noted that in his *History of English Literature* Lang made the unfortunate comment on *A Child's History of England* that " Dickens had none of the qualities of a historian " (this is really too much like the other comment by someone or other that Dickens was an unsuccessful editor—merely because he quitted the *Daily News* editorial chair in a hurry) and that " he treats Jeanne d'Arc as a conceited, hysterical little prig." I can find little trace of this in Dickens's considered eulogy of Joan, and I think that a " *real* reader " of Dickens would have taken the trouble to read the short chapter before writing such nonsense. How many more instances of the kind were there ?

That Lang was one of the great Dickensians I take it no one will deny, but he was that, inevitably, because he was a great writer and in his way a great man, though, I surmise, sadly lacking in some of the qualities that distinguished Dickens—luckily possessing some of the advantages Dickens never had. So he was " out of sympathy " sometimes; *and* with Thomas Hardy, *and* Max Beerbohm, *and* George Moore —who were in any case at daggers drawn both with him and one another. (Dickens, I am sure, would have sympathised with and delighted in all four of them—one has only to think of his encouragement of Sala.) But Lang had the sensible remedy and recommended it: in effect, if you don't like an author don't read him. He liked, he admired Dickens, but . . .

Well—as an instance—Lang admitted his complete failure to comprehend what the plot of *Martin Chuzzlewit* was all about, " what Montague Tigg had to make in the matter " (did he not, may we whisper, have to be the second victim of the murderer ?); " what," Lang continues, " all the pictures with plenty of shading illustrate."

There are no pictures with plenty of shading in *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

And what a pity that Lang missed the fun of finding out about the plots ! The " gentle chidings " should have come his way. It is not criticising a plot to say that you haven't read it.

I will tell Mr. Green one thing in Lang's favour: he was excepted from the strictures of T. W. H. Crosland's "The Unspeakable Scot." (But so for that matter was Swinburne in Crosland's pseudonymous sequel, "The Egregious English.")

One of these days I intend to try and find out—beginning with Mr. Green's very admirable book on Lang—why Lang detested the writings of Thomas Hardy so much that after *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* he refused to review them. I contrast his attitude, meanwhile, with that of a great-hearted Englishman, Lord Northcliffe, who wrote to Mrs. Thomas Hardy expressing surprise that the sale of Hardy's books was not great, and telling her that so far as his household was concerned Hardy's books were part of their lives. To Hardy himself Northcliffe wrote: "I could tell you the story of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* backwards." Lang was of course a very busy man; he had to read so much; but did not Northcliffe?

I am afraid the truth of the matter is that Lang was himself too much of a great Dickens character to be wholly objective. That is my elaboration. "Dear Andrew of the brindled hair" would have beaten Mr. Harold Skimpole to a frazzle.

In his book on Lang, Mr. Green says that Lang's notes and prefaces to the Gadshill edition "are of no special importance." I doubt very much whether the publishers would have agreed with that estimate.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT DICKENS COLLECTION

A catalogue has been recently received of a unique Dickens collection at the University of Texas, U.S.A. A limited edition of the catalogue, published by the Humanities Research Center—the first of the University's Bibliographical series—has been most carefully and meticulously compiled by Sister Mary Callister Carr, C.D.P., and will undoubtedly be a most useful record for future Dickensian studies and research.

In the introduction, the compiler refers to the remarkable feature of the collection being probably its near approach to completeness. To mention but a few of the valuable items—an unrecorded "prime" *Pickwick* in paper parts, *Oliver Twist*, both in the original three volume edition in brown cloth and in the subsequently issued ten monthly parts in green paper wrappers, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, both weekly and monthly, manuscript of "The Ivy Green" written and signed by Boz in the album of Georgiana Ross, before the poem was included in Chapter VI of *Pickwick* and over 150 holograph letters, including a set of unpublished letters to Thomas Mitton and Lieut. Frederick Tracey.

It almost sounds a quibble, but it seems a pity that one of the two charcoal drawings on the end-papers—the Coffee Room, George Inn, Southwark, is erroneously referred to as "where Mr. Pickwick first met Sam Weller." The immortal Pickwick says the White Hart, and we must allow that worthy gentleman to know best.

J.G.

OBITUARIES

Mrs. G. L. THIRKELL (ANGELA THIRKELL)

We very deeply regret to announce the death of Mrs. Angela Thirkell, novelist, on January 29th, on the eve of her 71st birthday. The author of more than thirty novels, she was best known for her stories centred on her favourite county, modern "Barsetshire." Daughter of the late Professor J. W. Mackail, her grandfather was Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and the first Earl Baldwin and Rudyard Kipling were her cousins. Angela Thirkell was a great Dickens enthusiast and often mentioned his works and characters in her novels. She was quite a regular attender of the Fellowship meetings in London and had been Vice-President for many years.

Mr. L. J. STYLES

We regret also to announce the death of Mr. L. J. Styles, London County Council Trustee of The Dickens House. A great friend of the late George Young, he was intensely interested in the connections of Dickens with Southwark and, thanks to his efforts, the notices erected in the district during the Festival of Britain calling attention to the many Dickensian associations were made permanent. His enthusiasm for the district earned him the name of "Mr. Southwark."

The deaths are also regretfully recorded of the following Dickensians: Mrs. Cathleen Wilson, Blackpool Branch, who arranged dramatic meetings and gave many recitals for the Fellowship; Mrs. A. F. Harvey, Maryville; Mr. T. Haythornwaite, Blackpool; Mrs. Leonard, Mrs. Mack and Miss L. McCutcheon, Madison; Mr. S. Page, Birmingham; Mr. E. F. Watherston, Victoria.

DICKENS FELLOWSHIP DIARY

Branch Secretaries are invited to contribute copies of their syllabus.
London Meetings appear on page iii of cover.

Bristol and Clifton	May	Annual General Meeting.
	June	Garden Party.
Hull	May 5th	Annual General Meeting.
Plymouth	June 24th	Annual Outing to Seaton, Sidmouth and Dartmouth.
Portsmouth	June 11th	Service at Portsmouth Cathedral to commemorate the death of Charles Dickens on June 9th, 1870.
Rochester	May 11th	Meeting—Speaker to be arranged.
	June 11th	Dickens Commemoration Service in Rochester Cathedral.
Sheffield	May 5th	Business Meeting.
Southend	May 10th	Whist Drive.
	,, 16th	Annual General Meeting.
Australia, Sydney	May 5th	*A Tale of Two Cities.* Prof. Wesley Milgate, M.A., Challis Prof. English Literature, Sydney University.
	June 2nd	"Dickens and the Schools." T. D. Bryant.
	July 7th	Social Night.
	Aug. 4th	"Doctor Dickens's Casebook." Dr. R. R. Winton, M.B., B.Sc., Editor *Medical Journal of Australia.*
Wolverhampton	,, 13th	Annual General Meeting.
Worcester (Mass.), U.S.A.	,, 17th	"The First Time I Read Dickens." Mrs. Woodbury.

Continued from page 128

GOLDEN JUBILEE

Congratulations to the Redditch Branch of the Fellowship on celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year on September 1st.

CHANGE IN BRANCH SECRETARY

Branch	*Newly appointed*	*Retiring*
Maryville (Missouri) ...	Mrs. Marshall E. Ford	Mrs. A. F. Harvey

FRIENDS OF *THE DICKENSIAN*

Rev. C. R. Childerstone. Mrs. Crevier. Mr. Philip Radford.

BROADSTAIRS ANNUAL DICKENS FESTIVAL

1961

JUNE, 12th to 17th inclusive

Organised by the Broadstairs Branch of the Dickens Fellowship.

DICKENS PLAY "PICKWICK"

Adapted by GLADYS WATERER. From the novel by Charles Dickens.

Walking Tour of Old Broadstairs. Dickensian Garden Party and Costume Parade. Children's Afternoon.

Conducted Coach Tour. Talk "Dickens in Broadstairs," Etc.

Further particulars of the Festival may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Broadstairs Branch, Dickens Fellowship, Dickens House, Broadstairs.

Please send a stamped addressed envelope.

The Dickens Fellowship

LONDON MEETINGS

MAY—

Fri. 5th. *Great Expectations,* play adapted and produced by Jane Bacon. Portland Hall. Tickets from Dickens House.

Sat. 13th. "Highgate," conducted by Ellen White. Meet Highgate Village bus stop at 2-30 p.m.

Fri.-Mon. 26th-29th. ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT LIVERPOOL. Full details on application.

JUNE—

Thurs. 8th. Wreath to be laid on Dickens's grave in Westminster Abbey. Preceded by a tour of the Abbey by invitation of the Dean. Meet West Door, 6-45 p.m.

Wed. 21st. Evening River Trip, conducted by Mostyn Harper. Tickets, 10*s.* 6*d.*, from Dickens House.

JULY—

Sat. 1st. Pilgrimage to Dover and Broadstairs (David Copperfield country) by motor-coach. Tickets, including lunch, tea and all gratuities, 35*s.* (admission to houses extra) from Dickens House.

Meetings, unless otherwise stated, are held at Swedenborg Hall, 20-22 Bloomsbury Way, W.C.1, at 7 p.m., doors open at 6.30 p.m. Admission to Lectures and Rambles by Membership card. Friends may be introduced at a charge of 2*s.* 6*d.* each.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

Founded 6th October, 1902.

LIST OF BRANCHES WITH HON. SECRETARIES.

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Hon. Editor of *The Dickensian:* LESLIE C. STAPLES.

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BLACKBURN (No. 107), 11-10-28.—LEO. MASON, 124 Preston New Road.

BLACKPOOL (No. 92), 16-2-23.—Mrs BRAMMER, 237 Waterloo Road.

BRISTOL AND CLIFTON DICKENS SOCIETY (No. 124), 1902.—C. W. DARLING, 208 Kellaway Avenue.

BROADSTAIRS (No. 130), 22-10-37.—Miss G. WATERER, Dickens House, Broadstairs.

EASTBOURNE (No. 75), 9-12-19.—C. G. VAUGHAN, 28 Upperton Gardens.

HULL (No. 34), 19-10-05.—Mr. & Mrs. HARR, 67a Golf Links Road.

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HOLLAND

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SYDNEY (N.S.W.) (No. 64), 19-12-12.—Mrs. L. BANNISTER, 1 The Strand, Rockdale.

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MONTREAL (Que.) (No. 52), 5-3-09.—Miss WHITE, 3439 Walkley Avenue.

TORONTO (Ont.) (No. 32), 9-5-05.—Mrs. E. SCHATZ, 66 Lankin Blvd.

VANCOUVER (B.C.) (No. 84), 15-9-21.—M H. G. POCOCK, 955 West 10th Avenue.

VICTORIA (B.C.) (No. 113), 3-1-31.—Mrs. D. WHITE, 86 Kingham Place.

WINNIPEG (Manitoba) (No. 25), 3-10-04.—M P. S. H. MURPHY, 59 Monck Avenue, Norwo

INDIA

JABALPUR (No. 146), R. K. GUPTA, Dept. of Engl Studies, Mahakoshal Mahavidyalaya, Jaabal M.P.

SOUTH AFRICA

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BLOOMINGTON (Indiana) (No. 140), 14-10-07 Mrs. R. W. HYNMAN, 318 S. Henderson Str

BOSTON (Mass.) (No. 73), 7-2-19.—Mrs. MART C. RIPLEY, 1600 Beacon Street, Brookline

CALIFORNIA PICKWICK CLUB (No. 12 2-4-38.—Mrs. EUNICE GRIFFITHS, 5418 Seve Avenue, Los Angeles, 43.

CHESTER (Pa.) (No. 22), 4-1-04.—Mrs. Jo O'BRIEN, 740 Irvington Road.

CHICAGO (Ill.) (No. 33), 24-5-05.—Mrs. DAM W. BRADFORD, 6060 N. Paulina Street.

EVERETT (Wash.) (No. 82), 7-4-21.—Mrs. MILLESON, 4022 High Street.

HONOLULU (Hawaii) (No. 115), 3-1-31.—M HELEN TOPHAM, University of Hawaii.

LOS ANGELES (Cal.) (No. 89), 9-3-22.—M J. H. STEIN, 8953 S. Ruthellen Avenue.

MADISON (Wis.) (No. 103), 16-11-27.—Mrs. HAMMER, Route 1, Box 7.

MARINETTE (Wis.) (No. 108), 6-4-29.—M ARTHUR POPE, 2712 Taylor Street.

MARYVILLE (Missouri) (No. 133), 9-10-42.—M M. E. FORD, 330 Grand Avenue.

NEW YORK CITY (N.Y.) (No. 29), 1-4-05.—M P. VALENTINE, 160 Columbia Heights, Brookl

OAKLAND St., ALBERTS COLLEGE (No. 14 2-10-54.—Rev. JOSEPH FULTON, P.P, St. Albe College, 6172 Chabot Road, Oakland 18, Ca

PALOS VERDES (Cal.) (No. 129), 1-10-36.—M A. H. PRIOR, Box 295.

PHILADELPHIA (Pa.) (No. 41), 7-2-07.—Miss HUNTER, 3507 Highland Avenue, Camden, N

PITTSBURGH (Pa.) (No. 97), 15-6-25.—M E. STEWART, 4409 Helmar Drive, Monroev

SEATTLE (Wash.) (No. 126), 7-2-21.—Mrs. B NEWMAN, 1222 Summit Apt 403.

SIERRA MADRE (Cal.) (No. 60), 7-2-12.—M TRULA SEWALL, 252½ E. Grand View Avenue

WORCESTER (Mass.) (No. 119), 26-1-32.—M EDGAR R. WALKER, 10 Devens Road.

The dates following the Number of each Branch indicates the date on which it was founded.

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